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Rob Wagner

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by

ROB WAGNER

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Tessie Moves Along

I

EVEN the sign of the Pork and Beanery was alluring. At a time when animated electric advertising was an expensive novelty, the display outside this famous Bowery "eating joint" compared in vivacity with the brightest on the Great White Way. Long before one could make out the meaning of the luminous tracery, its gayety was suggested by the rhythmic blinking of the lights, which, sifting through the black, latticed trestle of the elevated railroad, threw brilliant arabesques upon the buildings opposite and illumined the neighborhood for blocks around.

As for the sign itself, though a disfigurement by day, the moment it was turned on in the evening it became a never ending source of fascination and joy. Squarely in the center of the five-story building, between the second and third floors, was a huge pot traced in electric bulbs, and, within its incandescent border, the name of the place in ever-changing red and blue letters. Beside the pot a pig stood proudly on his hind legs, and by the cunning use of clock-worked switches, he stirred the suggested contents with metronomic regularity. Suddenly a bean hopped over the side and

was at once off on a dynamic journey around the outer edges of the building—the pig in full pursuit. Though starting with a difficult handicap, the porker gained upon his victim in the long stretches, but lost distance in turning the corners. Up one side, across the irregular sky line, and down the other, the race proceeded, the pursued always managing to keep a bean's length ahead of the pursuer. However, in the last few horizontal yards, when the pig chased the bean back into the pot, they were so close together that one never quite knew whether he caught it or not—a question freely debated on the sidewalk. With a real understanding of dramatic values, the sign-maker rang down a dark curtain on this climax—every light went out. In the next moment, however, they blazed forth again, and the race was on once more. Often people would stop and watch the novel pursuit over and over again, hoping that (perhaps—just once) the pig would catch the bean, or the bean would clearly outrun the pig.

The good humor suggested by the merry sign was carried inside, where, in spite of low ceilings and high smells—or perhaps because of them—one nevertheless felt the spirit of carnival. The brilliance of the lights, reflected in many soiled and perspiring mirrors, added something to this effect, as did also the mechanical orchestreon, with its crash of wind and brass. But after all, the real color was furnished by the patrons, for this was the meeting place of lower New York's notables.

It must not be inferred that beans and beer marked the gastronomic limits of this hospitable eatery. The mimeographed menus, paraffined through much handling, bore many an appetizing allurement of eggs and liver and short-ribs; and the more timely dishes were dashingly lettered on the windows, and limned upon the mirrors with a financial frankness that would have been shocking to the lobster patrons uptown.

Naturally, however, the *pièce de résistance* was pork and beans, and it was the excellence of this sturdy ration that gave the place its name and fame. In fact, so important in the cuisine of the establishment was this homely dish that its service was nothing less than a ritual. Placed in the center of the long counter across the far end of the room, a slightly raised dais upheld to view the huge black pot, steaming and aromatic, and immediately behind it a young lady in cap and apron did naught but "deal the beans" to the endless queue passing between the pot and the iron rail. As each hungry pilgrim held his heavy plate of steamboat china over the glowing crucible, she would ladle out, with a magnificent gesture, a generous helping that would have shocked those whose dietary needs were less robust, meanwhile keeping up an odd and inviting patter:

"Step right up, boys—a thousand for a dime! Hot, hot, hot—See 'em steam. Ho, there's a black one for luck. Whazzat? No, you can't beat the good ole bean. What makes the Boston boys so smart? Eh, what?

It's beans, folks, beans! There's brains in every bean —an' a thousand for a dime."

Tessie Boggs and Kitty Pilky, the young ladies who alternated hourly in this strenuous service, one tending the cash register while the other ladled, would punctuate the running eulogy to the lowly legume by smiling happily upon strangers, and kidding their acquaintances, who were in the vast majority. Of the two girls, Tessie Boggs, though not the prettier, was unmistakably held in the greater esteem, for what she lacked in beauty, she made up in magnetism and wit.

Kitty, on the other hand, had won her place in the sun by sheer physical beauty. Having little wit and no native intelligence, she possessed a soft candy-box prettiness that served her well in the conspicuous position of bean dealer. Though two years older than Tessie, and much larger, she leaned heavily upon her younger roommate in all matters of decision, and was as afraid of her disapproval as though Tessie were her mother—which, in fact, she had been ever since they worked together in the hat factory four years before.

"Kit, what was Scotty handin' you when he backed up on the beans?" asked Tessie during a lull in the early evening crowd.

"He wants me to step out with him on Wednesday night. He's promised to take me to a swell show and a lobster feed afterward."

"Well, you can't go, Kit. That boid is all wrong.

I got his number when I seen him trailin' with Silky Spense. He's a hop-head, and all these hops hoid together. D'you want to wake up in some Chinee joint? You jest pass up Scotty."

"I told him I'd go, so——"

"Well, tell him I said you couldn't, an' if he wants to know the reason, send him to me, Kit. All the swell fellas in town come to this joint, but you're always a-pickin' out some prune. Don't you know the diff'rence? What's the matter with you anyway?"

"Yes, they all come here, don't they?" replied Kitty with sarcasm. "How about Jan—'Jan Morsowski, the Polish Cyclone?' There's one headliner who's never set foot in the Beanery. Even when Pop Dorgan offered him a big blow after his fight with the Yid Kid, did he come? No, he toined him down cold. There's one swell gent you'll never meet in this dump. An' c'n you see Montaigne Belmont standin' up in that bean line?"

"No, I've given up hope that Jan 'll ever come in here," answered Tessie wistfully. "The papers say he won't go anywhere but to his job and night school; and you'd hardly expect Montaigne Belmont and the rich movie stars to eat beans when they can afford bees' knees; but all the other headliners in this part of town are beaneaters, and yet you are always a-pickin' out some flashy boid you don't know nothin' about. An' if you don't listen to your little Tessie, some day you're goin' to get beautifully stang. Jest a minute, here

come the animals—" And the young lady stepped over to her steaming pot.

"Come a runnin', boys. Hot, hot, hot! A thousand fer a dime! Well, well, if there ain't my old college chum, Chan. How'dy, Chan? How'll have 'em, tight er loose? A bit o' poik? Sure your religion don't foibid it? Eh, what?"

II

ON Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, Kitty and Tessie got off at eight o'clock, and on these nights they went to the movies, unless by some chance Tessie permitted Kitty to eat lobster with a young man who had passed her inspection of morals. Tessie wouldn't have missed the movies for all the lobsters in the world—human or crustacean, for she had lived largely in her dreams, and the pictures carried her on flickering flights to where dreams came true; but Kitty's appetites were more objective, and she would gladly pass up vicarious thrills of the cinema for a "good raggy dance" or a "swell feed."

There was one film favorite, however, from whose pictures even a lobster could not entice Kitty. It was Montaigne Belmont, the handsomest male in celluloid captivity, who at that time—about 1910—had the hearts of shop girls missing beats all over the U.S.A. Montaigne Belmont was straight legged, and wore a dress suit with the ease that a king wears his crown.

His classic head, set on a gracefully exposed neck, was crowned with curly hair, Byronically free, while his heavy-lashed eyes were as full of romance as a June moon. When he looked languishingly into the face of the lucky lady playing opposite him, every maiden in the audience melted—and swallowed her gum.

On Monday night Montaigne was scheduled to appear at the Superba in a three-reel picture entitled: "The Kiss That Killed." Leaving the Beanery on the minute, Kitty and Tessie hurried down so as to be in time to enjoy two full performances. Paying ten cents each for the best seats, they crowded into the cavernous depths of the cinema palace, and filling their mouths with heavily minted gum, as an antidote for the pungently aromatic odors that only an East Side audience could produce, they sat down to wait for the big thrill, to behold Montaigne Belmont, and to witness a kiss that would kill.

A travelogue was in operation when they arrived and for three hundred feet of scratched and dancing film they permitted themselves to be dragged through interminable tunnels in the Swiss Alps, until they were so dizzy they had to hold the seat arms for support.

As an optical relief, an illustrated song was next on the program. Suddenly out of the blackness of the cavern a lozenge of light appeared at the side of the stage, revealing a tall gentleman, in a dress suit and pompadour hair, standing like a wax manikin in a kind of luminous cabinet, which cut him off at the knees,

while a brass rail bisected him at the equator. The picture suggested nothing so much as a wax murderer standing eerily at ease in the Eden Musee. The organ rolled tremulously, and then the wax man suddenly came to life, and with deep feeling for his subject, burst forth, his Adam's apple keeping appropriate time:

"In an old New England Homestead
A gray haired couple dwell——"

Accompanying this couplet a great stereopticon picture was thrown on the screen, showing an aged man in a bright blue shirt and an equally aged woman in a bright red skirt, sitting on a white porch covered with ivy of a bright paris green. The colors, though simple, had much vivacity.

Then as the singer progressed in the song of the girl who went wrong, the pictures requisitely illustrated the text.

"Their heads bowed down in sorrow
For the one they loved so well."

(Same picture as above, only heads are now bowed.)

"She up and left her happy home
To go, O, God knows where."

(Picture of maiden leaving with red shawl about her head.)

" 'Twas in a fit of anger that she
Left the old folks there."

Though the song was entitled: "It's a Picture No

Artist Can Paint," the stereopticon fellow succeeded very well, judging by the applause the number received.

The next was a one-reel comic, called "The Beauty Parlor," and it turned out to be a picture entirely lacking in repose, but screamingly funny, for the doctors took the most amusing liberties with their patients, stretching them on racks to make them tall, and putting them in presses to reduce the weight. Tender-stomached, nice people might have felt squeamish in seeing the poundage reduced to a fluid, but these simple denizens of the East Side squealed their appreciation of the humor. The film ended in a riot of hoses and splashing cataclysms.

Then came the feature, "The Kiss That Killed," a story of strong situation and big punches, in which Montaigne Belmont performed heroisms that only a superman would have dared. Breathlessly Kitty watched her idol save Cutie Cutura from every disaster the director could crowd into three reels, at last beating up the world's champion in an honorable prize fight.

When the fight episode flashed upon the screen, Tessie joyously seized Kitty by the arm, for Montie's opponent was none other than the hero of her dreams, Jan Morsowski, the Polish Cyclone, who had been seduced from the squared circle just to give reality to the scene. After that, even the fatal kiss lacked interest for Tessie. She sat through the show again just to see Jan. It was eleven o'clock when the two girls,

chewing furiously, left the Superba and went to their room on Avenue B.

III

THE flickering films are responsible for much more than mere entertainment. For twenty centuries the poets and singers from Homer to Jimmie Montague had been rhapsodizing about babbling brooks, soft southern moons, bosky glens and lilac "love-lots," but of such intriguing sets the million children, cliff-dwelling in New York tenements, knew no more than does a mole of the glories of the morning. Such things were not to be found in their world of bricks, cement and iron—and alas, they did not read poetry.

Then, in the first decade of the present century, along came the moving picture, carrying to the pop eyes of these impressionable and imprisoned children beautiful facts of a strange world lying beyond Manhattan. Can-fed lads learned for the first time how milk comes from cows, and lovelorn lassies saw romance in settings far from the madding and rubbering crowd. For five cents, these youngsters were carried, on a magic ribbon of celluloid, from tin roofs and asphalt pavements, to open fields and sun-kissed hills, where even the birds lived outside cages and geraniums grew potless. It was an unfoldment that destined unlooked for results.

Tessie Boggs and Kitty Pilky had spent their childhood in almost utter ignorance of the physical cosmos that lay beyond Fourteenth Street and the East River, but in their middle teens, unlike their less fortunate sisters, they had taken to literature, and had achieved at least an academic knowledge of bosky glens and babbling brooks. Kitty's favorite magazine, *Saucy Stories*, though stressing the complex life of urban civilization, often led its readers through the perfumed aisles of exotic horticulture; and in Tessie's more classic reading, Ouida had shown her the close relationship between love and moonlight. Added to these informations came the movies to complete their education. Tessie and Kitty knew all about romance and adventure as practiced in novels and nickleodeons.

Upon their return "home" after the superb excitements of The Superba, both girls were athrill with the romance that lay beyond the tumult of the Bowery. How they wished they could fly away on the great adventure. They talked so volubly that the realities of their sordid environment were obliterated by the pictures of their dream world. Holding fast to these elusive thoughts, they opened the door of their first-floor-back bedroom to behold a strange intrusion. Like Truth, this room lay at the bottom of a well into which very little light crept, even in the daytime, but now it was bathed in a soft, white glow, and traced upon the floor were four phosphorescent lozenges. Dashing to the window the surprised tenants both looked up to

learn the cause of the unusual illumination. It was the moon!

One may wonder at their surprise, but when one's heavenly outlook is limited to a strip of sky the size of a hall carpet, it is only by the merest astronomical chance that the moon will ever come into so small an astral segment. But by some curious orientation of the heavens, here it was right over the shaft of the deep court. Of course, the girls had seen the moon before, but only in rather unsuccessful competition with the myriad lights of the cañons in which they lived and had their being, and the truth is, they had never thought much about it. But now, beholding it through the dark telescope of the tenement shaft, they began to see what the poets had been raving about, and why the movies always faded out to its romantic accompaniment.

At first they stood speechless, gazing up through the tracery of washed linens to catch fugitive glances of the great disc as it moved slowly across the heavens; but as their necks began to ache, Tessie suggested pulling the bed beside the window, and "hitting the hay" where they could attain a right-angular attitude. Thus they lay in utter comfort, abandoning themselves to the lunar bath, and it was not long before the old magic began to work. Yes, this same moon was somewhere looking down on a man and a maid in a bosky glen, or gently smiling into the face of a pretty girl while a handsome youth tinkled a mandolin in the other end of

a canoe. For a glorious half hour they gazed upon this brilliant link with the outer world before the great reflector disappeared over the red-brick rim. It was Kitty who first confessed.

"Chee, Tess, I think I'd be willin' to die on the spot if I cud have Montaigne Belmont hold me in his arms like he does Cutie Cutura. . . . Chee! how I'd like to be in the movin' pitchers! Think o' wearin' all them swell rags, an' fur coats, an' silk stockin's! An' drivin' around to swell feeds in a taxi with a private chofewer! An' wine! Do you know I ain't never even tasted champagne, an' think of usin' scents that cost twenty dollars a bottle. Loid, it must smell swell! The *Flicker* says that Gloria Gladsome uses a bottle every time she bathes. Aw, rats, I hadn't ought to be in no beanery, Tess, I know I cud do as well in the pitchers as some of them dolls we see. How do you s'pose they make the grade anyway? Chee, all I ast is jest one chanct." And Kitty turned her head so she could look at the half-tone stars ravished from film magazines that garnished her wall. Only their bare masses could be distinguished, yet she knew them every one,—what they wore, how they succeeded, and their favorite food and drink.

"Yes, I'd like to be in the movies, too," purred Tessie dreamily, "just to meet some nice people. The boys at the Beanery are all right, I s'pose, but chee, I wish they had sweller manners. I'd give a lot to know a real refined gentleman. I don't care so much about

drinkin' champagne and eatin' gold fish, but I sure would like to know some man who is handsome and strong, and—wouldn't throw the skillet at you if he got mad."

"Thinkin' of Jan, I s'pose?"

"Yes, Jan, if you want t' know."

"Well, he ain't no movie, he's jest a fighter—a poik-an'-bean fighter at that. They jest had him in that one pitcher to do a fight."

"Well, I like him a lot anyway. He's got wonderful eyes and a finer figger than your old Montie. Deitz tells me he's a gentleman too—only fightin' fer the fun of it. He says his father was a high-up Polish baron or somethin' who was killed in a revolution, and Jan came to this country with his mother when he was a kid. He ain't a loafer either; he woiks. He give his mother a fur coat at Christmas—'ja hear that? Of course, they's a lotta fellas knock him because he don't train aroun' with the gang, but goes to night school instead. That boy is a prince, Kit, an' every knock I hear is a boost."

"They tell me he's a Yid," replied Kitty, with crushing intent.

"Mebbe he is and mebbe he ain't. Anyway, Pop Dorgan says the Jews is jest like the Irish, the best or the woist in the world, an' if Jan's a Yid, he's one of the best. I'd walk to Harlem this minute if I thought I could see that fillum again to-night," and Tessie sighed dreamily.

"All right, kiddo, you kin have your little Polish pug, but when it comes to the final clinch I'll take Montie Belmont fer mine."

"You remember, Kit, what the Indian said: 'It's a good thing tastes differ, or every man 'd want my squaw'? Well, I'm glad you don't want Jan, fer I'd stand a swell chance then, wouldn't I?"

"What chanct d'ya stand of even meetin' him, as it is? You admit he's not likely to come to the Beanery, any more'n Montie Belmont is."

A long silence.

"Good night, Kit, old dear. It's wonderful, ain't it?"

"Good night, Tess."

Reaching back with almost automatic gestures, each stuck her gum on her own bedpost, where, according to the wrapper, it was guaranteed to hold the flavor overnight. Then while Kitty passed off in a happy kaleidoscope of silks, satins, and gay-colored bubbles, Tessie dreamed of her hero, strong and vital, but, oh, so gentle.

. . . . . .

It is true that Jan Morsowski had never set foot within the Temple of the Beans, and the chance of the great Montaigne Belmont ever entering its portals was remote indeed; yet fate, after all, deals largely in the remote and unexpected.

IV

IN 1910 Jim Driver was already a veteran of the photodrama. Coming into this newest form of entertainment when it was still but a bag of tricks and thrills, and long before it was regarded as an art, he was one of the first to see its dramatic possibilities.

Jim's interest in the business began when he was ballyhooing throughout the middle west for Dr. Yokum's Marvelous Medicines. He had secured a hundred or so feet of film showing a magician cutting off the head of a willing victim, and then placing it back again upon the bloodless neck of the torso. It was the success of this show that caused him to leave the beneficent Doctor and go to New York where he sought out the impresarios of the cinema.

For several years Driver experimented in those mechanical tricks of the camera that so bewildered and amused our first audiences, but it was not long before he began to see the humorous possibilities of the chase and the cataclysm, and he turned out some tumultuous split-reels at that time that raised him to the forefront of cinema directors.

Even when the footage increased and short themes began to take the place of mere episodic narratives, Jim Driver held his own with the newer men coming into the field, and though his sense of dramatic values

was very vague, he managed to put over his story by big "punches." It was he who first startled the moving picture world by wrecking a train as the climax of a tempestuous scenario, securing for the purpose an old engine that had been scheduled to collide for exhibition purposes at a county fair. He also claimed—but why invite trouble?—so did others. The honors for conceiving our early crashing drama are still fiercely debated by the pioneer directors. It is sufficient to record, however, that by the end of the first decade, Jim Driver had become one of the highest priests in the temple of the new art.

It is difficult to realize the importance of the director in those early days, for he was often author, editor, cutter, location hunter, technical director, and what not; about the only function that he did not fulfill being that of camera man, and a few of them even undertook that.

Of all the strong-arm directors of that pioneer period, Driver was the greatest czar, and by 1910 he had forced himself to the top of his profession and was making the famous Climax thrillers.

Before moving to Brooklyn, the Climax Film Company had been located in an old piano warehouse in lower New York, and the little revolving stage on the roof—pushed on its axis so as to follow the sun—was entirely adequate to the few interiors required by the strenuous Driver.—"Howinell can enthin' important happen indoors? There ain't room!" he often said.

But now, in the big plant over the river, with its glass stage and plenty of room, other companies were making one-reel society dramas that depended less upon riotous punches than dramatic action, and required many interiors, even Driver seeing that interior "punches" were possible.

At that time, the Climax had a great many people working in stock, and the directors were supposed to choose their casts from among them, even the so-called stars often appearing in lesser rôles in support of one another. Beyond these, there was the technical staff to draw from, and as a last resort, the immediate neighborhood could be invaded for anything from a policeman to a housewife. So novel and alluring were the moving pictures to the surrounding townsfolk, that for the nominal fee of a dollar a day one could secure all the types such a neighborhood afforded, and then Jim would take a chance on stock actors in make-up, with results rarely satisfactory to his exacting demands.

"Fer Gawd's sake, Minnie, is that yer idea of an e'side waitress? Say, whereja get that stuff, anyhow? Gawdamighty, dearie, d'yu think this is a musical comedy? I don't know much about the Bowery, comin' from Chicago, but that walk you're pullin' ain't human. Try it again."

Then as his stock cast gave a stage interpretation of East Side customs and manners, a great disgust overwhelmed Mr. Driver. Sinking lower and lower in his chair, his megaphonic directions growing louder and

louder with each successive slump, he finally dropped the big funnel on the floor and summed up his artistic disapproval with a sincere but faint, "Aw, hell."

"Gwan, git out!" he called as he rose and stretched himself. "We'll do this scene to-morra, but not with a pair o' quinces like you two."

"I wonder what's het the ol' boy up so, Min?" calmly observed Blondy Bates, on the way to the dressing room.

"They tell me the Police won't stand for his runnin' that big automobile over the side of the Brooklyn bridge, and he's sorer'n a boil," volunteered Minnie Stromberg.

"Aw, well, we should worry. He'll be around 'dearie'n' us tomorrow and pawin' us all over with them big hands of his'n."

It was no doubt true that Driver was much upset by any authority, even that of the New York police challenging his artistic needs, for when it came to shooting big punches, he demanded the utmost latitude; but in this particular case it was the scene in hand that had stirred his indignation. Jim was a great local colorist, and if he wished to cast a barber or a locomotive engineer, he found a barber or an engineer to play the part. "Act? They don't have to know how to act. I'll tell 'em all the actin' they have to do. But they gotta look the part. These here stage directors can use actors an' character men if they want, but your Uncle Jim is goin' to use types." Driver walked over

to the office of his publicity man to see what could be done.

Ben McGowan had been an old newspaper man on one of the big New York dailies and was probably the best educated member of the Climax staff. He was consequently called in upon all discussions of policy, and his encyclopedic knowledge drawn upon in conferences regarding production. It was rumored that he even had a hand in writing most of the scenarios credited to Driver, and if he had not made a final editing of Jim's titles, the English language would have suffered greater onslaughts than those the villains inflicted on the heroes in the stories. McGowan, plump, spectacled and bald, was ex officio guide, philosopher, friend, editor, casting director, and general peacemaker of the Climax studio.

"Mac," said the great Jim Driver, as he flopped into an ample chair half full of newspapers, "you know N'York better'n I do. Can't you lead me to some dump on the East Side t'night where I can dig up a pair o' skirts to do this here restaurant scene?"

"Sure I can, Jim," replied his salaried brains. "I know just the place. The Pork and Beanery on the lower Bowery. It's one of the show places of New York and the social center of the East Side. Yet there aren't half a dozen people, besides the newspaper boys, living above Fourteenth Street who have ever heard of it."

"Great, great, Mac—and say, Monte," Driver ex-

claimed, turning to his leading man, who was reading some late publicity about himself, "you'd better join us. It'll help you understand your part."

"I'm on," said the handsome Montaigne Belmont.

V

THERE are shrines scattered here and there over the world, to which sooner or later the itinerant Great make pilgrimage, and it is the custom of the shrinal custodian to see that Importance leaves his mark behind him. Sometimes he is induced to carve his immortal name in the huge oaken table, or perhaps draw a funny picture on the wall; maybe he will present a photograph of his noble façade dashingly signed across the coat; or at least he is sure to inscribe his John Hancock in the distinguished visitors' register. So deep-rooted is the hero-worshiping instinct in the hearts of the undistinguished that they are often more interested in breathing the same air their gods have breathed than in the shrine itself. Just to have stood on the spot where Ann Hathaway kissed Will Shakespeare, or slept in the bed where Iago choked daylight from the eyes of dainty Desdemona—ah, the inframan will go far to enjoy such thrills.

Pop Dorgan had capitalized this human weakness to the limit. All over the Beanery, on counters, posts, and walls, were souvenirs of great events and personages. The ball that won the pennant that year for the

Giants stood glass-enclosed, upon a pedestal near the door. Horseshoes from Maud S. to Joe Patchen made a fine metallic frieze above the service counter, and suspended right over Dorgan's desk in his room in the corner was a stuffed monster with a human head, but the body and tail of a fish.

The story that went with it bore evidence of Dorgan's understanding of popular interest in abnormalities. It seems that a friend of his, the mate of a British frigate, captured the creature in the South Sea islands, and when it was finally landed aboard ship after a most terrific struggle, in which the manfish bit the arms and legs off innumerable sailors, it was subdued only by smothering it in the chloroform weed which grows in the deep sea of those far-away islands. Even then, the boat was pursued for leagues and leagues by a school of the strange beasts, calling loudly their curses in sounds weirdly human.

The exhibit causing the greatest interest, however, was a string of photographs that completely encircled the wall above the mirrors, and was now on its second lap. Here were autographed pictures of the Beanery's notable patrons. Arranged in chronological order, beginning at the door, it formed a pictorial epic of the Bowery's social life from the early days of Tweed and Tammany right down to Nazimova, then creating a sensation in the big Yiddish theater up the street. Here was Steve Brodie, standing as he did the day he jumped off Brooklyn Bridge, Tommy Ryan, the Ter-

rible Turk, Flannigan, The Olympic hammer thrower, Chuck Conners and Little Tim Sullivan. All these and more of the East Side gods were on exhibition, and every one of the Olympians had written on the pasteboard a sentiment in splendid praise of The Beanery, or in extravagant friendship for Dorgan.

Better still than these personal, but rather detached photographs, was a series begun about four years ago showing the Great Man as an actual patron of the Beanery. One of the waiters, an amateur photographer, had on one occasion made a flashlight of a distinguished person, and, ever since, his services had been invoked to shoot any notables entering the temple. To new patrons these pictures of contemporary heroes were immensely interesting, and the old customers were always alert to take in the latest additions to this ever-growing gallery.

There was, however, a certain monotony to these flashlights, for the figures were invariably posed beside the pot, the celebrity holding his plate, with the priestess of the temple ladling out the famous beans, and Pop Dorgan standing beside the superman in a proprietary attitude. To those unused to the sudden magnesium explosion, a flashlight rarely does full justice, and it must be admitted that in this unique gallery our heroes looked out upon the world with the eyes of scared codfish.

It has been noted before that there was one celebrity at that time in fistic ascendency, whose face was not to

be found among those who had been present in the Pork and Beanery. But this did not prevent Tessie, whose particular hero he was, from personally pinning a picture of the Polish Cyclone on the wall back of the bean pot. The young lady had selected it from several heroes for sale at post-card emporiums and it showed the young man in a classic attitude of defense. Furthermore, it was inscribed and signed, but only Tessie knew how that famous name had been charmingly forged on the bottom—"To Tessie Boggs—Yours truly, Jan Morsowski."

. . . . . .

Strangely enough, Jan Morsowski was the last fellow in the world the average person would have picked out for a fighter. Seeing him working a linotype machine down in Wilson's print shop, one would have thought him about as belligerent as a ribbon clerk. Of medium height and slight of build, he presented none of the physical evidences one associates with pugilism: a perfectly straight, and, as yet, unmutilated nose, well-shaped ears, a sensitive mouth, refined chin, and most untypical of all, dark, kindly, dreamy eyes set high in the head.

It was when he was stripped down to his short blue trunks, that the sporting cognoscenti blinked their eyes. There are two well-defined types of fighters esteemed by fans, the overmuscled, thick-necked, anthropoidally-headed brute built like a Percheron truck horse, and the sleek, straight-muscled fellow with the grace-

ful lines of a Kentucky thoroughbred. Jan Morsowski was the latter. Broad of shoulder but small of loin, his ring appearance was that of a young Greek god, while the grace and fluent ease of his movements suggested the panther rather than the bull. And so fastidiously careful was he of his person that in his fight with Red Egan, though he had to floor that savage stevedore four times before he was counted out, he danced all about the prostrate hulk of his adversary, as if fearing to soil his clean white legs with the fellow's "claret."

The worshipers in that virile world of heroes counted it a great social privilege even to have shaken hands with a person of Jan's prestige, and Tessie's signed photograph of the local champion naturally added greatly to that young lady's caste.

On the night following the girls' adventure with the moon, the Beanery was aglow with the vivacious carnival spirit that made its hospitality so inviting. The tables were full, friendly patrons nodding and waving and calling to one another. Scattered here and there were small groups in the center of which a local god was holding court. And while the orchestreon crashed out the latest opus of Irving Berlin, Pop Dorgan amiably wandered about giving the gladsome up-and-down to the merrymakers, and seeing that all were eatily happy.

Suddenly a hush fell over the place, and Kitty, who was at the cash register, looked up to see what had

happened. Tessie, in cap and apron, was so busy serving the line with beans and banter that she did not notice the suggestive calm.

"Come along, boys," she was saying, "while they are hot! Well, as I live, if here ain't Willie the Wop and his old side-kick Hoit. Glad to see you, little ones. How's tricks? . . ." Suddenly she was interrupted by Kitty calling behind her hand.

"Fer Gawd's sake, Tess, there he is!" It was as though she were announcing the presence of President Roosevelt or King George, and Tessie, dropping the ladle, stood on her tiptoes to see who "he" was. Notwithstanding her elevation, the diminutive servitor was too short to catch through the heads of the waiting line anything but a quick glance of three men who had just come in the door.

"Look, kid, it's Jan Morsowski," and Kitty chewed violently on her gum.

By this time the place was a buzz of excitement; and Pop Dorgan, having reached the newcomers, was attempting to place them at a conspicuous table where all could see his latest leonine capture. Jan was evidently a bashful lion, for he begged excuses and indicated his preference for standing in the bean line and taking his turn, an act of humility not usually exhibited by the limelighters of his set.

Perhaps the proudest men in New York that night were the two young sporting bucks who had lured their hero into the Valhalla of Bowery social life. Such

intimacy with the great gave them a class they had never before enjoyed. As Jan walked along, engaged in happy conversation by Dorgan, his gentlemen-in-waiting expanded genially with the possessive feeling of exhibitors. They felt almost like partners in Jan's greatness, and they threw out their chests receptively to the admiring eyes of the excited patrons.

During Jan's long pilgrimage to the pot, Tessie was as excited as a débutante about to meet a Yale halfback. She did her best to maintain her dignity and poise, but the nearer he came the more excited she grew. Finally, her impatience was exasperated by Dorgan's unctuous interest, which caused Jan to turn his face from her point of observation.

She saw enough, however, to stir her deeply. She had read of his victory over Red Egan the night before; but he had evidently paid the price, for one eye was bandaged and several strips of white plaster interrupted his other features. In upper Manhattan, one did not appear socially if one's façade showed surgical violence. Society people do not exhibit their wounds. But in a world where even domestic difficulties are often settled by impact, a black eye is likely to happen to anyone. If the East Siders stayed in utter seclusion while their wounds healed, there would be many leaders missing at every gathering, and so it was that Jan appeared in the social vortex quite unashamed of his honorable blemishes.

Worst of all, the dressings prevented Tessie from

getting a satisfactory look at what she knew from his photographs must be a very handsome face. She was sure of this now because of his one good eye, which was deep and lustrous, his winning smile, and beautiful teeth.

Finally Jan and his entourage arrived before the high altar where our heroine presided, and Tessie was at last going to look right into the face of her ideal of splendid manhood. Suddenly his attention was diverted by the arrival of Schmitty, with his camera and flashlight, and while this busy functionary was setting up his instruments, Pop Dorgan arranged the tableau. Jan was asked to hold his plate while Tessie filled it with a generous helping of beans, but as he was requested to look into the camera, she could see only the back of his head.

Then in the tenseness of the dramatic suspense, the flash went off, and in the excitement of the moment, Tessie's usually perfect technic suffered a partial eclipse and she only half filled his plate, the other half dripping over the edge with a slow mucilaginous spatter.

Dorgan, used to the flashlight, was the first to recover his eyesight, and turning to beam upon the tableau beheld the *faux pas*. Pock-marked and normally red, the proprietor turned splotchy purple. With angry impulsiveness he stepped over the rail and, shoving Tessie roughly to one side, seized the ladle from her shaking hand and filled a clean plate. "Here,

Mr. Morsowski," he said with a forced smile, while attempting to change plates.

"Aw, that's all right, Mr. Dorgan," smiled Jan pleasantly. "This is all I can eat anyway." And turning to the confused girl he added, "Don't feel so cut up. We all spill the beans occasionally. I nearly dropped the thing myself when that flash went off."

Jan would have passed on, but through his one unbandaged eye he observed Dorgan, in his unsuppressed anger, deliberately pinch Tessie's upper arm as he returned the ladle. Though her face contracted in pain, she uttered not the slightest sound. The cruelty of the action caused the blood to rise in Jan's neck, and he leaned over and said so quietly that only a few could hear, "Dorgan, you're a damn brute."

"I'm a what?" snorted the choleric proprietor as he poked his head over the pot.

"I said you were a damn brute," replied Jan calmly, "and if there weren't ladies present, I'd make it stronger than that."

"I am, am I?" Dorgan gulped, and his eyes blazed. "Well, I'll take that from no runt like you. Not in my own place!" and he lunged forward, striking wildly at his guest and knocking over the pot in his fierce and sudden onslaught.

It was all over so quickly that few people knew exactly what happened, for waiters and spectators dashed up instantly and pulled Jan off the prostrate figure. In that short moment, however, Dorgan had

met with some kind of physical or spiritual jolt that made him quite amenable to the suggestion of his waiters that he be taken to the kitchen and cleaned up, for his shoes and trouser legs were literally covered with blood and beans.

If such a brawl had taken place uptown, the evening-clothed patrons would have run hurriedly from the place, the women squealing with fright. The habitués of the P and B reacted in no such way. On the contrary, they rushed forward and formed an eager circle, those behind climbing on chairs and tables to see the thrilling excitement. Thus were they grouped when the show was stopped almost as soon as it began.

When Dorgan had been dazedly led off to his cleaning, Jan straightened the pot and was just turning to leave with his two friends when he glanced up and saw Tessie's pale face. Stepping quickly over the rail on to the platform he took her hand and, patting it tenderly, said, "I'm sorry, this thing happened. I didn't earn my Cyclone title in brawls of this kind, but I couldn't stand seeing that brute pinch you. Please forgive me, I—I——."

Jan stopped in the middle of his apology. His eyes had perceived his own garlanded picture on the wall over Tessie's shoulder, and seeing it, he smiled, not in vanity, but at the signature, the chirography of which was so unlike his own. Then turning his head he beheld Kitty, a broad grin on her face, pantomiming to

him that this heroic deification was the work of Tessie, standing so shaken before him.

"Will Dorgan take this out on you?" he asked.

"O, he'll probably fire us both," cut in Kitty, "but that's nothin'. He's done that often, but he always asts us to come back."

"Well, if you lose your jobs on my account, let me know, won't you?" Jan took both of Tessie's hands in his, and as her head was still bent forward, he patted her gently on the top of her golden hair, greatly to the amusement of the crowd.

For a full minute Tessie stood stock still. The shock of the little drama had given way to a curious calm during which her pale face took on a flush, and her heart beat rapidly. She was undergoing an emotion that sent the blood singing through her like a giant jew's-harp. Jan was everything her dream had pictured. Everybody laughed at his caress, but to Tessie it was the expression of an adorable tenderness.

Fortunately the exit of Jan and his friends occupied the entire attention of the spectators, and no one observed Tessie's pensive attitude, from which she was abruptly shaken by a voice behind her.

"Now, beat it, you and your Pilky friend, too." It was Dorgan, calmed and cleaned, but inwardly raging.

Without a word Tessie motioned to Kitty and both left for their lockers, Kitty eagerly inquiring what the boss had said. Summoning two other girls, Dorgan soon had the service running as smoothly as though

nothing had happened, though the incident was still the subject of lively interest among the diners.

"If you lose your jobs on my account, let me know!" Jan had said it. No, Tessie was not in the least depressed as she and Kitty, bundles under their arms, made their way to the door. In fact, there was a light in the younger one's face that bespoke a certain expectant pleasure as the result of her "canning."

But the adventures of this fateful night were not yet over. Stopping to extend a greeting to some of their acquaintances, the girls were just about to pass out into the crowded street when Kitty noticed someone beckoning them from a table in the corner by the window. Perfunctorily she took Tessie by the sleeve and stepped across to where three men were sitting.

"Fired, eh?" said the heavy-set man in the middle.

"Yes, sir," replied Kitty.

"Well, how would you like to work in the movies?" The Climax director leaned back, pushed his hat up, and grinned expansively. He knew better than anyone the electric thrill contained in that question. Work in the movies! Why, there wasn't a girl in town but would leave her very gods to achieve such a delicious experience. He was hardly prepared for Tessie's rejoinder.

"Quit your kiddin'. Come on, Kit, the beans have gone to their brains," and Tessie grabbed her companion and started for the door. But Kitty was rooted to the spot, gazing vacantly into the face of the tall

handsome man on Driver's right who was looking ravishingly into the eyes of his startled victim like a man conscious of his charms.

"Yes, Tess, they're movies all right," she was saying, when the bald-headed man spoke up.

"Your friend is right, Miss—Miss Boggs—We're from the Climax Studio in Brooklyn. We are making a scene something like this, and we thought perhaps you girls could help us do it properly. Here is our card." And sure enough it bore the magic name of "The Climax Studio" with the usual information regarding streets and telephone.

"So if you want to earn a few bucks workin' extra," added Driver, "come over to the studio to-morra mornin' at nine. Wear what you had on to-night, and don't be late." The famous director wrote something on a card. "Here, give this at the gate," and rising he stretched himself as though acceptance was a foregone conclusion. No one had ever yet been known to refuse such a chance."

"All right, sir, we'll be there," gasped Kitty, as the two girls, scrutinizing the card, hurried out.

Needless to say, this little scene had been observed by Pop Dorgan from across the room, and just as his strange guests were leaving he strolled up.

"Givin' 'em jobs?" he asked with eyebrows lifted and thumbs in his arm pits.

"Yes, we're goin' to use 'em for a few days over at the Climax Studio."

"Movie stuff, hey? Whatcha goin' to pay 'em?"

"Oh, three dollars, I guess."

"Three dollars a week?"

"Three dollars a day. But what's it to you?" Driver's ire was aroused by Dorgan's implied challenge.

"Well, p'haps I may send for 'em to come back here, that's all."

"What's your drag? They're not your kids, are they?" and Driver shifted his cigar.

"No, but I guess they'll come back if I tell 'em to," replied the proprietor with a cryptic smile as he strolled away.

"The old dog seems to have somethin' on 'em, Mac," said Driver as they made their exit from The Beanery. "But we'll see."

. . . . . .

Once outside, Kitty grabbed her companion by the arm and fairly exploded. "Do you know who that was, Tess? It was Montaigne Belmont! O, Tess, just think of it? Chee, I just can't wait till mornin'!"

"Well, your cutie has sure got wonderful lamps, Kit, but I don't like his mouth. It's too loose. He's handsome all right, tho."

"O, and such a figger," gasped the breathless Kitty, her eyes nearly popping out of her head. "You can't say his shoulders ain't manly. His——"

"You can't tell nothin' about a fella's shoulders these days, Kit. Prob'ly they're jest pads. An' if

you ast me, I think Driver is pretty rough. But I did like Mr. Mac. Now, *he's* a gentleman. Mebbe there'll be more like *him* over there."

"Or like Jan," said Kitty. . . . "Like Jan, kid," persisted Kitty, who could never fathom Tessie's mysterious silences when her deepest feelings were stirred.

"Mebbe," said Tessie, and the hope caused Tessie's pale little face to take on a color that made her almost pretty.

The intimate confidences of these two children of the tenements as they lay rapturously on their bed that night in their dingy room expressed all the hopes and dreams that youth has had since the world began.

It was as though a fairy had waved her wand, and instantly their dream heroes had appeared in the flesh; and then, sensationally capping it all, the gates of the Climax Studio had been thrown open and they had been bidden to enter. The steamy brilliance of the Pork and Beanery seemed tawdry in comparison to the happy land they had seen in their moonlit dreams of the night before. It was two o'clock before they stuck their gum wads on the bedposts and drifted off to the land of the lotus eaters.

VI

IT is indubitably true that thousands and thousands of New York's East Side children have never seen a tree, but Tessie and Kitty had traveled. They

had been to Coney once, and on two occasions had attended chowder parties up the river as guests of their Tammany district leader. However, this was their first adventure over the Brooklyn Bridge.

On this never-to-be-forgotten morning they occupied front seats on the trolley, and watched what seemed to them the whole world going the other way in crowded trains, for at this time of day the traffic was almost wholly Manhattanward. But even the novelty of the aerial voyage occupied little of their attention, for they were thinking only of the fairyland that lay at the end of their journey.

"There it is—there it is—" gasped Kitty as they debarked at the appointed corner and beheld the words "Climax Studio" lettered the length of a high board fence.

"Chee, it don't look much from the outside, does it?" spoke up Tessie with some disappointment. "But p'raps it's all right inside."

Walking down the rickety sidewalk they came to a crowd of perhaps a hundred people waiting outside a gate.

"Say, where do we get in?" asked Tessie of a big sailor from the navy yard.

"Right down there, kid, but you'll have to take your place in line."

"Not me, bo; we go right in. Come along, Kit," and the young lady, taking command, as she did in all serious matters, led her companion toward the gate.

"Say, what d' you suppose all these bums are doin' here, Kit? Look at that old guy with the glasses. You'd think he owned a bank or somethin'. An' say, pipe the old girl with the two kids."

When they reached the gate the hopeful aspirants for movie fame found there was an etiquette to employment seeking.

"Say, beat it down to the end of the line, what makes you think you can horn in here?" spoke the monster at the gate—a clean-shaven old man, who, to judge from his appearance, might one day have been an actor himself.

"But, we've got business in there. I want t' see Mr. Driver. Here—" and Tessie attempted to present the card she had been given.

"Nothin' doin', child, take your turn now like a good little girl," and the gateman waved her away with great finality while admitting two others who were showing proper credentials.

"Come along, Kit," said Tessie proudly, "that's why that fella's a gateman, and he'll never be enthin' else. Come with me and we'll crash in here if we have to use the ax in the Climax." Paying not the slightest attention to the directions, the young lady led her timorous roommate up two steps to a door beside which was a sign: "Office. All extras apply at the gate."

At the far end of the narrow wooden corridor in which the girls found themselves was a wooden railing behind which sat a preadolescent office boy immersed

in the cataclysmic adventures of the Katzenjammer Kids.

"Hello, Edgar, run along and tell Mr. Driver that Miss Boggs and Miss Pilky are here. Hurry now, for you're holdin' up the whole woiks."

"I am, am I?" came back the nonchalant reply that did not even interrupt the young wicket keeper's interest in Fritz and Hans. "Well, if you want to git on *this* lot you'll have to go in by the gate," and "Edgar" slouched down behind his paper.

But Tessie was purposeful and did not propose to be shunted around by any underlings—not when she had written authority from the great Jim Driver. Reaching over, she pulled the paper from the lad's hand and taking him by the ear, gave it a good twist.

The piercing squeal emitted by the freckle-faced boy instantly brought an eye-shaded and coatless clerk bounding through a side door. "Here, here, what's the matter?" he asked.

"Well, ain't this enough to get us in here?" asked Tessie, pompously handing Driver's card to the intruder.

"Sure," replied the clerk with a smile, after reading the pasteboard. "But what are you doing to our hard-working little Edgar?"

"Haw, haw, his name *is* Edgar, Kit, I knew it!" Turning to the smiling man she added, "The poor little fish didn't know us, I guess, and he wouldn't let us in—that's all."

"Well, he'll know you next time, no doubt. Edgar, take a good look at the ladies." But Edgar contented himself with an expression of great disgust and one disdainful word: "Rats!"

And so at last the happy girls passed through the gate into the Magic Land of Make-Believe, that magnificent dream country where ladies lolled in limousines and sport-shirted heroes went canoeing with silver-slippered heroines.

VII

AS Tessie Boggs and Kitty Pilky emerged from the office and stood on the steps leading to the lot of the Climax Studio, the expectant look in their eager faces changed to disappointment and chagrin. This was not at all like the Fairyland of their dreams. They had expected to arrive in a fairy park filled with splendid palaces through which strolled magnificent men and ravishing ladies, attended by an army of photographers taking their pictures in all sorts of intriguing poses. Instead, they looked upon the backs of several great wooden buildings with no more architectural merit than saw mills, while hither and thither dashed carpenters, stage hands, and other overalled functionaries, as unpoetic and unpicturesque as their workshops.

"P'raps it's all inside," ventured Tessie hopefully.

"Here you—you're workin' in the Driver set, ain't

you? Well, come with me." And Beatty, assistant to the great director, led the pale but excited girls to a small court flanked on one side by the camera vault, on another by the cutting room, while at the far end was the gate, through which they were supposed to have entered.

On the two long sides of the court were benches upon which was congregated the strangest assortment of human beings these girls had ever beheld: cowboys, shop girls, plumbers, precocious children with protecting parents, has-been actors, Chinamen, Negroes, callow, cigaretty youths, and even a Turk. All sorts and conditions of men, women, and children sunning themselves in the open and, for the most part, reading moving picture magazines.

"Sit there, till I call you," ordered the efficient Beatty, and then abruptly left on his hurried duties.

This was more like it. The girls beamed at the kaleidoscopic picture the colorful characters presented, little realizing that they themselves were strikingly picturesque to the others.

"Workin' in the restaurant scene, dearie?" asked a voice beside Tessie, and she turned to look into the face of the typical young, old-time dramatic actor. But before she could reply he went on: "Pretty good make-ups you got on. The trouble with most of these here so-called actors is they overdo it. I know the East Side of New York from the Battery to Fourteenth Street, an' you kids 'a got it just right. Now, for

Gawd's sake, don't let the wardrobe department kill it."

"Say, Tess, is he kiddin' us?" whispered Kitty.

"I thought so at foist," answered the alert youngster, her face puckered into a frown, "but now I know why Driver ast us to come in the clothes we had on—we're 'types,' Kit, all right. Well, if that's what they want, let's play it strong." Then by way of diversion she turned to her right-hand companion.

"Say, Bo, where do you get that 'dearie' stuff?" she asked, smiling.

"Aw, don't pay no attention to Steve," laughed a buxom lass of forty, two seats down the line. "Steve even 'dearies' me. He thinks he's a director."

"Well, if I couldn't direct pitchers better'n some of these birds, I'd eat my hat. Look at Phelan; two years ago he was drivin' a taxicab; and Driver—who was he? Just a ballyhoo for a medicine show. The only director they got on the lot that knows picture action is Jim Dansig, an' they don't give him a look in. Besides, look at the stuff they pull around here. If I had a daughter, I'd see her in hell b'fore I'd let her work in this game."

Then: "Here you, come along." It was Beatty calling to Tess and Kit. "Driver won't be shootin' your set till eleven o'clock, but you better be made up." Leading them to a little room on the end of a row of dressing rooms, he turned them over to the cosmetic mercies of Mr. George Hemming.

Physically these two young friends were antipodally

unlike. Tessie, small but upstanding, had the unsexed, boyish figure of Peter Pan; Kitty, larger, fuller and more femininely ripened, proclaimed her sex in every curve of her soft, well-rounded contours. The contrast was further emphasized in their eyes; Tessie's were open, frank and challenging, Kitty's were languid, melting, and aphrodisiacal.

In dress, the girls were fashionable according to the times, with the usual exaggerations that obtain among the lower levels when imitating Fifth Avenue standards, their skirts being aggressively tight and plaid, their dinky pie-plate hats pitched at an angle peculiarly Boweryesque.

The hirsute crown of women always lends itself to amazing fashionable changes, and the style in vogue at the beginning of this story had harked back to the Greek. It consisted of a knot that projected abaft the wearer's head like the stern of a racing sloop, wire "rats," cunningly concealed within, being used to support the strange extension. Needing all available tensile support for the projecting cantilever, the lady's mane was brushed slickly back from the brow, while those who could spare a few shorter hairs plastered them in various designs athwart the temples.

Tessie, being modest, had a simple little blonde crescent in the middle of her forehead; but Kitty, always an extremist in style, had saved enough of her short forelocks to achieve a pair of black, crescent spit curls which she plastered upon the top of

either cheek, and to complete the allurement, she had stuck a jet black star of court plaster in the center of the one "next to her heart." If these were in truth what our grandmothers called "kiss-me-quick's" Kitty had made one of hers a perfect target, with a bull's-eye to help the assailant to his mark.

This now historic coif was probably the oddest hairdressing our countrymen ever endured, and it was its startling exaggeration on the heads of Tessie and Kitty that made them conspicuous even in the human potpourri on the benches.

"Say, kid, you got an awful map." Thus Hemming. "What's the matter with your skin? Beans, hey? Well, I guess I can fix you up with Number Two."

It was true. Tessie had what was known as a bath-towel complexion.

"What's *your* name? Pilky?" asked Hemming, turning to Kitty. "Well, you're easy. Jest a light coat o' three and a two powder. Now rub in the cold cream good and hard. I take it the game is new to you kids. Well, watch close an' you kin do it yourselves next time. . . . Jest can that gum chewin' now while I line your eyes."

That Hemming knew his business was evidenced by the results, for when the girls emerged their skins were actinically identical and equally clear. "Chee, Tess, you wouldn't be so bad lookin' if you had a skin like that all the time," ventured Kit.

"Would it be all right if we wandered around until

we are wanted?" asked Tessie, deferentially, for she hadn't yet sorted out the respective authorities of the various functionaries.

"Sure, but just let Beatty know where you are in case they begin shootin'."

If the fairyland of their dreams was not realized as they passed through the mystic portals of the Climax Studios and beheld the grim unpainted backs of the stages, the sight that met the grease-painted eyes of our young neophytes, when they looked upon the carnival-like spectacle on the lot, compensated entirely. On the huge open-air stage the carpenters were giving the finishing touches to an interior set of a palatial house that was the last word in cinema magnificence.

This was the first time in their lives that these two daughters of the tenements had been permitted to peek into the splendid homes of the idle rich.

The interiors used in the earlier movies had been simple affairs—two flats forming the angle of a room, a door in one and a window in the other; a chair, a table, and a picture on the wall completed the illusion.

If lace curtains were added, they always blew about, for though the scene suggested sheltered comfort, the chances are that it had been shot on the unprotected roof of a wind-swept warehouse. Furthermore, the early directors welcomed movement even in the properties, otherwise some of the lowbrows might think they were looking upon the old-fashioned, stereopticon, still picture.

But things had suddenly changed. The dramatic chaps had proved that real situations could happen indoors, and they had begun to build interiors like ones used on the stage. "All right," Driver had said, "if we're goin' to shoot indoors we'll do it right. First, we'll cut out the canvas; this scenery don't have to travel. And I don't want no scenic artists; their perspective is all wrong, for instead of havin' three thousand eyes in the audience, ours is jest reversed and we have only one—in the camera." So Driver was the first to ignore stage perspective and to build solid sets with real casements for windows and doors.

If this famous director added much to the structural solidity of those early interiors, he was not so successful when it came to representing the atmosphere of the leisure class. He believed the homes of the rich were always curtained with heavy velvets, palms everywhere, and a plaster Cupid and Psyche were inevitable. Real magnificence was achieved only by a staggering clutter of heavily carved tables, chairs, and settees.

Driver also introduced a set of character symbols that to this day are used by his school of dramatic impresarios. His housemaids wore tidies on their heads and curtsied like bobbing corks; his snobbish butlers performed vicarious leisure by standing with frozen spines and arms like parentheses; his dowagers always carried lorgnettes, and sniffed at their social inferiors.

Such was the picture of high life that "the Bowery bean shooters" were looking upon for the first time.

"Chee, Tess, ain't it grand? Think of livin' in a place like that."

"Not for me, Kit. I'd feel like a horse in a hall bedroom in a dump like that. I'd just as lief live in Siegle-Cooper's window. There's too much foiniture; I'd get all tangled up in it."

As the society scene was having an inexplicable wait, the two girls wandered over to the next set, an interior scene for a tenement story.

"What they waitin' for?" asked Kitty of Hank Todd, a stage carpenter standing by.

"While Mr. Montaigne Belmont sharpens his pearly teeth and rouges his pretty lunch trap," and the carpenter spat with a huge and masculine contempt. Evidently "Montie" didn't stand high with the more robust of his gender.

But Kitty was as excited as Cinderella about to see her prince.

"Oh, let's wait," she said. "I'm just crazy to see him act."

"Then you'd better send for your lunch. That dub don't work over union hours. An' if he should happen to have a pain in his lap from eatin' hummin' birds at the Waldorf-Astoria, he might not be back for a week. He's a tender flower, is little Montie."

"Let's see what's goin' on here, Kit," said Tessie, leading her cow-eyed companion to a tenement set,

cheek-by-jowl with the Climax Studio's idea of a Fifth Avenue salon.

Beside a bed sat a young lady, evidently the heroine. Three feet away stood a camera, poking its impertinent nozzle full in her face while the director knelt at her feet.

"Now, think of your mother the day she died; you remember how she lay in bed lookin' at the ceilin'. Now—now, what were her last words—Say, can't you cry? What th' 'ell's the matter with yu anyhow?"

"I can't, Mr. Fancher. I'm trying hard, but I can't," came back the frightened reply.

"All right, Miss Pinhead—we'll jest get someone on the set that kin emote. You're a prune—that's what you are; and the sooner you git back to the steam laundry, the better."

Then came the flood. What sentimentalizing failed to do, anger accomplished.

"I thought so," squealed the director, jumping up. "Camera!"

"So that's the way they do it, Kit. Well, I call that poor stuff. I'll bet *I* could cry if they gave me a cryin' part."

"Yes, you c'd," was the only reply vouchsafed by Miss Pilky.

There were other scenes besides these two representing the topmost and nether crusts of our social life that were calling the girls. Out on the lot was a "Street in Cairo," with the colorful splendor of Coney Island.

Beyond that, a western mining town was being shot up by a bunch of wild-riding cowboys; off in a corner an African jungle set, built about a tank, was offering a white-helmeted hero a chance to save his lady love by diving into a bevy of hungry crocodiles.

VIII

MOVING like colored shuttles in some great loom, gaudily dressed characters passed endlessly back and forth between the dressing rooms and sets, and the monstrous sight-seeing busses about to take their uniformed occupants out on location, wove a design of bewildering beauty in the minds of Tessie Boggs and Kitty Pilky. Here within a city block one could travel from Cairo to Coney, from Egypt to Arizona. It was like a trip on a magic carpet. To the two girls whose lives had been lived within the bells and smells of a single New York ward, it was a scene of utter, but happy, bewilderment.

Standing in the midst of the lot, hardly knowing which way to turn, they were suddenly interrupted in their fairy dream by a familiar voice.

"Hey, you bean shooters, get over on the glass stage. Driver's waitin' fer you."

When, out of breath from running the length of the lot, the "bean shooters" entered the great sliding doors of the glass stage, they learned the reason of Driver's delay. The morning had evidently been devoted to

building an almost exact replica of the Pork and Beanery, even to the pot and the signed photographs on the wall.

"Here, you—what's your name? Get up there and deal them beans. And you, dearie, go up and work the cash register jest as you did last night." It was Driver, the greatest of the Climax directors.

When they got to their places, the girls looked out over the heads of their "customers" for all the world just as if they were back on their old jobs.

"Does it make you homesick, Tess?" asked Kitty from behind her cage.

"No; I hoped I was getting away from beans when I came here," answered the other. "But it'll be fun to see how the Beanery really looks in pitchers. And won't the gang laugh when they see us?"

Simplicity of their tasks were not the only surprises in store for them. Driver, it seemed, had been amazingly observant, for the scene was no sooner set than he called through his megaphone, "Now, dearie, call out that patter of your'n and let's see the bunch file up and get their beans. Are you ready? . . . Then go!"

In an instant Tessie was actually back at her old work:

"Come right up, boys, a thousand fer a dime. Hot—hot—hot! Ho, well if there ain't my ole college chum, Fred Livermore! Hello, Fred. An' Tote Holden! Evenin', Tote. How's Effie? Now, come a-runnin', mates; beans'll give you brains. Oysters 'er

full of pee-tomaines; but nobody dies of bean-stroke. Well, well, well——"

"Great, Tessie, that's it—now keep it up," came the bellowing voice of Driver. "An' you, Kitty, there, lamp 'em as they pay their checks, an' don't ferget yer chewin' gum. Hey, there, McCurdy, a little action in the line—talk to the girls at the table. Now, that's fine—we'll shoot the scene. Back in your places."

To the credit of Driver, who was a realist who knew instantly what he wanted, the scene was shot almost as the single rehearsal transpired. Then as a further surprise to his Bowery-imported talent, the next scene showed the entrance of a fellow made up very much as Jan Morsowski had been the previous evening, even to the bandaged eye, excepting in this case he was in the company of a young woman.

The latter, however, had the musical comedy idea of the East Side girl, and swaggered into the set with a tough walk and her hat over one eye, talking meanwhile out of the corner of her mouth.

"Naw—that's not it. I don't know much about East-Siders, but they don't act that way," snorted Driver.

"Let me show you how Spike Lazear's skirt comes to the Beanery, Mr. Driver," ventured Tessie. "But you'll have to get me a string o' beads. She always wears 'em."

"Jump, Beatty, and get the beads—let's have this thing right," replied Driver, addressing his assistant. As though produced by magic, Tessie was almost

immediately handed the prop. Then, borrowing a hat from one of the extras, she made her entrance with Jan's counterfeit.

Driver watched the action narrowly and snorted his appreciation; and when Tessie took her place at the table and instead of pulling the tough technic supposed to be indigenous to the Bowery, began to attitudinize with languorous and vampish ease, everybody howled.

"Great!" he shouted. "Now, that's somethin' like it. If some of you dubs had as much sense of comedy as this little dame who's actin' fer the first time, you'd get on better. Now, Winnie, see if you can git that action."

Winnie tried, and though she didn't do it with Tessie's inimitable suavity, the scene was finally O.K.'d.

"Yer all right, dearie. Don't let her go, Beatty, after this pitcher is shot. I kin use this kid again."

"Girls, Mr. Driver will be working for two more days on this set—he'll want you again; so report here to-morrow morning at nine o'clock." It was McGowan speaking. He came up just as they were emerging from the big dressing room. "And I judge from what he says about you, Miss Boggs, that he can use you again. Perhaps we can fix it so that both of you will have regular work. Did you enjoy it to-day?"

"Why, Mr. Mac—that's your name, isn't it?"—and McGowan grinned his acknowledgment. "I think it's poifectly grand. How much do we get?"

"Well, because you did bits, you'll probably get

seven dollars apiece for your work to-day, but of course you won't always get that. Sometimes you'll get only three, when you are just plain extras."

"Oh, chee, even that's a lot more'n we ever got at the Beanery—and besides there's some chanct here."

"Well, you'll get your bumps too. There are some pretty rough people around the lot; but if you get into difficulties, come to me, and I'll see what I can do. To-morrow I'll tell you things you ought to know. Good-bye."

"Isn't he a dear, Kit?" grinned Tessie as the round, bald figure of McGowan walked away. "Now, he's a gentleman, *I* know. I could just love *him*. And he has such beautiful eyes."

"Say, Tess, you see beauty in the darndest places! He's all right, o' course; but beautiful eyes—behind spectacles? Say, Tess, you're some describer."

That night the girls again lay awake for hours, recounting the marvelous adventures of the day. Only twenty-four hours ago they had been servants in a Bowery beanery; since that time they had been to Fairyland—and it was all true.

IX

WHEN the two girls reported for work the next morning, it was unnecessary to overwhelm Edgar, the office boy. Old Tatum, the gateman, recognized them instantly, and they

walked right in, loftily passing some fifty hopeful aspirants waiting without the mystic portal.

"Let's see if we can't do our own make-ups, Kit," said Tessie, leading the way to the extras' dressing room, which they found already crowded with supernumeraries in various states of undress.

"They're goin' to shoot the big reception-scene in the Phelan set," announced a tall blonde creature in cheap chiffon and Woolworth jewelry, to her similarly dressed companion, sitting at the long, mirrored bench.

"Is Mr. Belmont goin' to act?" asked Kitty breathlessly, with eyes sparkling.

"Sure, Montie is goin' to act; an' say, kid, if you want to see somebody that'll drive Spencer Grandon back into vaudeville, just come over and see him work. I had a close-up with him on Friday. He says I've got the makin's of a real fillum queen."

"That's nothin," cut in the lady's social rival. "Do you remember 'The Purple Hour'? Well, in that scene at the swell's garden-party, I was standin' right beside him. I got Jimmie Bates to get me a print of the still and it shows his hand actually restin' on my shoulder. 'Rose,' he said, 'you got a great figger. I wanta use you some time in a bathin' girl story.' It's good Cutie ain't seen that still. I bet she'd be sorer'n a boil. She's supposed to be the boss's cutie, but she's awful stuck on Montie."

That the great Montaigne Belmont was a favorite with the ladies was made even more evident when the

girls wandered over on the big interior set an hour later while Driver was having a Chinese opium joint built into the street that had been under construction for two days.

Phelan was directing some action with a butler and two maids in which the leading man and the society extras did not take part, and during the wait Montaigne Belmont in dress-suited elegance had seated himself in his private chair, upon the back of which his own name was emblazoned as a warning of its exclusiveness. Gathered about him on cushions and foot-stools clustered six adoring admirers of his cast.

"Chee, your friend Montie is some sultan, eh, what?" asked Tessie of her excited companion. "Lamp the Fatima on his right. She seems to be his favor-ite all right, all right." The observation appeared correct, for at that moment Montie was casually running his fingers through the young lady's blonde and curly thatch, while, with his head sunk low on his immaculate shirt-front, he was looking off thoughtfully into space, resolving, no doubt, some of the more recondite problems of his dramatic cosmos.

Had Tessie been on the other side, however, she would have noted that while the great actor toyed with the tresses of his blonde "Fatima," he impersonally patted the cheek of the dreamy-eyed lass on his left, whose face lay languorously against the post of his chair. The truth was that Montie's affections were distributed with the greatest catholicity. His soul was

too great to be given into the possession of one woman.

"You can have your beautiful Montie, Kit, for all o' me. When your little Tessie becomes the cutie of any man, she'll not be one of a chorus."

But Kitty was nevertheless impressed with the luxuriousness of Montie's attentions and would have given her soul to have changed places with the blonde Fatima. Yet what gulfs separated her from such a court! She was merely a little waitress who had come in to type a part, and would no doubt be back shooting beans in another week or two.

She had a very short time to learn, however, that in the Fairyland of the Climax Studio the great distance between the upper and lower crusts was more apparent than real. As a cat may, with perfect propriety, look at a king, Kitty, seeing the many functionaries passing back and forth upon their various errands in front of Montie, decided to indulge her feline prerogative and get a big delicious eye-full of his majesty, and so she boldly left the sidelines and, walking across the set, stopped deliberately before the King of the Kinema and looked directly into his lustrous eyes.

The epigrammarian made no reference to kings looking at cats, but there must have been something soft and purry in the beauty of Kitty that attracted his highness's attention, for gently withdrawing his amorously occupied hands and stepping over the slave at his feet, Montaigne Belmont walked forward with regal gallantry and extended his hand.

"Ah, Miss Pilky, I met you night before last. So you've come to work at the deah old Climax. I'm delighted, I'm shuah. Permit me to hope that I may have you with me in my next pictyah. You have a beautiful face, Miss Pilky, and I'm shuah you'll be a success in pictyahs. I'll speak to Mr. Driver about you."

And with her heart beating in almost breathless ecstasy, Kitty felt the thrill of a delicious pressure on her hand.

If any young person ever touched Heaven, it was Kitty Pilky at that moment. Almost dizzy with the intoxication of it, she could hardly walk off the set, failing, of course, to see the daggers that were shot at her from the eyes of the court ladies clustered about the foot of the throne.

"That's all right; it sounds fine," said Tessie, after listening to the hectic and gum-accompanied recital of Kit's presentation at court. "But there ain't been any call for us this morning. Driver is over in his office now and I have a hunch that somethin' is about to happen. Montie may like your cow-eyes, but it's Driver deals out the jobs. Kit, I'm afraid we're through. Somethin' tells me we're fired."

Though it was hardly to be expected that Tessie's pessimism would pry Kitty from the heights of her anticipation, yet there was something disconcerting in her friend's hunch. She had seen Tessie's hunches develop into realities before. In fact, Kitty believed Tes-

sie possessed a psychic feel for unseen things that was little less than clairvoyant.

An hour later, while eating pie and coffee at Ptomaine Tommy's across the street, the possible truth of Tessie's premonition came to them like a staggering blow.

"Say, kids," said Beatty breezing in, "Mr. Driver wants to see you in his office right away. Better beat it right over. The Big Chief's one of them do-it-now fellas."

Tremblingly they made their way across the street and entered the main gate, outside of which still stood some fifty hopefuls who looked upon the faces of the two girls with ill-concealed envy. They little knew, however, of the pallor concealed by that seductive grease-paint.

Passing through the yard, they were just turning the corner by the camera vaults leading to Driver's office, when Tessie stopped and clutched Kitty's arm; and the latter, looking ahead, saw some one emerge from the director's door that caused her to clutch Tessie in turn.

"Fer Gawd's sake, Tess, how did she know we was here? Chee, I knew sumpthin' would happen. Now we're canned. I'll bet Pop Dorgan done this."

"Well, let's have it over with," answered Tessie bravely, and led the way to the office.

"Close the door; I want to talk to you a minute," said Driver, turning in his seat as soon as the girls came in.

"So you're wards of the Juvenile Court, eh?" he went on, tipping back his hat and blowing a long cloud of smoke.

"Yessir," answered Tessie with decision, while Kitty's knees nearly gave way beneath her.

"Well, Mrs. Davis, your probation officer, has been here to see me and told me *all* about it." He looked at them knowingly. "She was inclined to make trouble, for you should have reported to her before coming here. You know you're not supposed to change your jobs without permission. We've got to play it safe with the Juvenile Court, or we'd have all the delinquents in town workin' for us, but I fixed it up all right. I've signed up for your good behavior, and so long as you behave, you'll be able to stay." And folding up a small paper, he put it in a pigeonhole.

"Then we don't have to go?" asked Kitty with returning strength.

"On the contrary, I'm goin' to start shootin' a story with Montaigne Belmont next week and he asked particularly to have you with him." He added, smiling: "I guess we can work Tessie in, too, though I'm afraid she'll have to work extra. You see, dearie, you're a little undeveloped for anything but kid stuff," and he patted Tessie's shoulder in an affectionately paternal manner. "Now, run along and be on the street-set by one o'clock."

"Oh, Tess, ain't it grand?" exclaimed Kitty when they were out in the sunlight again. "They can't tell

me Mr. Driver's a brute. He's a prince, if you ast me. Say, gimme five packages of Rosemint gum, quick!" This to the sleepy-eyed purveyor of candy, cigarettes, and chewing gum standing by the gate. But the younger girl was satisfied with the wad she was chewing.

Tessie had a perfect horror of law courts and the police, and it took an heroic effort on her part to refuse to "tell on" her weak sister on the occasion when Kitty had stolen from Dorgan's till, for it meant going before the juvenile judge and submitting to the fear of a jail sentence. But because of the judge's inability to fix the blame, the sentence was not imposed, both girls being put on probation instead. Up to the time of her interview with Driver, Tessie did not know she had been branded as a "delinquent." She felt the word had a horribly sinister meaning.

"What are you thinking about, little one?" asked McGowan an hour later, near the street-set, as he hooked his arm into Tessie's and walked along with her.

"Oh, hello, Mr. Mac," she replied, looking up wanly into his smiling face.

"I was jest wondering what does the word 'delinquent' mean."

"Why, it usually means some one who has defaulted a debt. Why do you ask?"

"No, that ain't it. I mean in regard to a girl."

"Oh, ho," laughed her companion. "Well, Tessie, a

delinquent girl is one under legal age who has done something wrong, stealing, breaking windows and what not. Any so-called crime a kid does nowadays will make her one if she's caught. But you're not breaking windows, are you, Tessie? Don't, for a lot of people misunderstand these things, and the fact that you've been in court would be hard to explain, especially for a girl. Tell me, how are you getting on? Are they treating you all right?"

"Sure, but this is the foist time I've ever been jealous of Kit's pretty map. I see it's worth a lot in this business. But I'm goin' to stick it out."

"Don't you worry, little girl. Take care of yourself and keep your eyes open. The baby-dolls are having their day now, but there's a big chance coming for the girl with wit and intelligence and ability to act. Any time you get into a jam, just come to your old Uncle Mac."

X

IT was not only by her wit that Tessie began to make herself useful on the lot of the Climax Studio. Her nerve was even more valuable. While Kitty achieved almost instant success because of her good looks and the transparent partiality of Montaigne Belmont, Tessie proved her worth by doubling in an animal picture that Driver had tried with small success to fake.

Tessie in her impish and slangy free-spiritedness had made friends with everybody on the lot, from the camera-kids, as the assistants were called—one of whom, by the way, was old enough to be her father—to Big Otto, the animal trainer, in charge of the zoo. Otto had noted with interest her absolute lack of fear in playing with his charges, and he began to think up little scenes he might be able to use in the pictures.

Thus it came about that they had secretly framed, and even surreptitiously rehearsed, a bit of spectacular action with Cæsar, the big African lion. The secret was finally confided to Driver, who immediately wrote an episode into a story he was doing, in which Cutie Cutura was taking the leading part. As it was necessary to give the star "the gravy," all Tessie could hope was to double for Cutie and let her have the credit.

On the day the picture was to be shot, every person on the lot suspended operations and crowded around the high wire fence enclosing the half acre in which a very realistic jungle had been built. There was always a fascination about the animal stuff, even when it was faked; but the rumor had gone about that a dangerous picture was to be shot, and so the crowd was as alert as a society gathering of the long-ago in the Roman coliseum.

"Heavens, it's Cutie Cutura," exploded a big fat extra woman, as a petite little figure, wearing the costume of the film queen, with whom she had just been acting, entered the enclosure.

"Cutie, yer grandmother," snorted Hank Todd, while emitting the salivary consequences of a large wad of Teamster's Delight he had just bitten off. "That's Tessie Boggs! I'll bet my britches Cutie's hidin' in the camera vaults. She ain't got nerve enough to act with a brass monkey. But take it from me, that Tessie kid'll ride anything from a baby to a bear." Hank Todd had evidently been present at the rehearsals.

It was no time for further comment. The set was ready; Cæsar paced his cage, way off back of the jungle, from which he was soon to be released; the sharpshooters were at their posts, the gate-keeper ready for an emergency exit; the camera men tuned up within their respective wirings; and Driver, concealed behind a bamboo screen, stood ready with his megaphone in hand.

The intention of the scene was to duplicate and improve, if possible, a story that came across the continent from a Los Angeles studio a month before, telling how Gene Williamson had, in an emergency, faced a pursuing lion and stopped it with the sheer impact of her unexpected nerve; but as the action was unlooked for, the cameras had not secured the scene. Big Otto, using his promising pupil, was determined that the Climax would get it if it cost him three cameras and a two-thousand-dollar lion, to say nothing of an actress. Though there weren't many film actresses for whom he'd sacrifice the king of beasts.

Suddenly Driver lifted his megaphone: "Let 'em

out, Bill." Then hearing the cage open he called: "Camera!"

A hush fell over the audience. In the foreground, Tessie could be seen walking slowly toward the camera, apparently unconscious of any danger, stooping to pick flowers in order that her face would not show and spoil the "double." Then all at once a crash, and Cæsar sprang through the concealing underbrush at the rear of the enclosure. At a signal from Driver, Tessie turned her head with a sudden gesture of horror, and began to run down stage, the big lion gaining upon her with great bounds.

"Now!" called Otto, who had taken the megaphone from Driver. Girl and lion had come within twenty feet of the camera, when quick as a flash Tessie stopped, whirled about and walked straight back to Cæsar, who had come to an abrupt standstill, and eyeing him face-to-face, she deliberately reached out and scratched him between the eyes.

So far, the scene had gone according to schedule; but now a great fear gripped even the heart of Otto; for at both tryouts, when Cæsar had been thus confronted, he had slunk away in sheer chagrin and shame. But whether it was the presence of the crowd, or the fact that he had been twice defeated by the young girl, or the strangeness of her clothes, or the click of the cameras—in any event, on this momentous occasion he did not turn, but began suddenly and menacingly to snarl, and lash his tail in quick staccatic sweeps. "Stick it out,

kid; he'll quit if you don't weaken," boomed Otto through his horn. And Tessie stuck, though there was none present who understood what it was costing her, for her legs seemed on the point of giving way beneath her. The wits inside her little blonde head were not giving way, however. "Forget it, Cæsar, you big chump," she was saying. "Now, run along or I'll bite yer ear off."

During ten terrible seconds, Cæsar emitted such a series of sinister snarls that the spectators were chilled to their hearts, and their voices stopped in their throats. Then slowly—slowly, and furtively—the big beast's eyes began to shift; his snarls died down and down; and then quietly and shamefully turning sidewise, he trotted off—mad clean through, but beaten! When, with a last defiant growl he entered the protecting jungle, Tessie completed the action by nonchalantly resuming her walk. Her thinking of this important business was perhaps the best and bravest thing of all she did.

"O, never again," exclaimed the real heroine of the story as she sank into a chair, pale as a sheet of paper. "It wasn't so bad at the time, but I'm all in now." It is doubtful if she even heard the cheers of the crowd or the words of praise heaped on her.

"Brave? Don't tell me I'm brave. I'm sick. Where's Mr. Mac?"

When at last the publicity man came to her she threw herself into his arms, crying, "Mr. Mac, I'm

ashamed o' bein' such a coward—but I'm jest bushed."

"All you want's a stick of gum," consoled McGowan, with his fatherly arms tight about her shoulder. "Here, take this and forget it. Otto was more scared than you were. He says you've got the best nerve in the world."

XI

"SAY, dearie, kin you swim?"

"Sure—why?"

"Well, we're goin' to do some water stuff and Cutie won't stand for it. So if you c'n swim, I'll double you in the scene. Besides, it's an easy way a-pickin' up another ten spot." And Driver walked over to the dressing room with his arm about Tessie's waist in what he considered a kindly, big-brotherly attitude. At the door he gave her a little quick hug saying, "You're all right, Tessie. I'll make an actress of you yet. You jest stick close to your Uncle Jim an' I'll land you among the stars." Tessie smiled her appreciation of the opportunity but ventured no comment.

The girls had now been at the Climax Studio for six weeks with practically continuous work. In fact, after the third week, they had been put in stock, Kitty drawing twenty-five dollars a week as a regular, and Tessie fifteen, as a utility actress and stunt girl. This latter pay was fortified, however, by the hundred dollars Mr. Emil Glatz had given Tessie for the lion picture.

With their munificent salaries, the girls had given up their New York room and taken a small apartment near the studio, which they had arranged in a manner becoming to their new station in life. The *pièce de résistance* of their cultural surroundings was a magnificent piano upon which they were paying three dollars a week, with two years in which to complete the payments. Not that either of the girls could play beyond a few doubtful chords and several original variations of "chopsticks," but some of their friends at the studio were perfect "bearcats" when it came to "frisking the ivories," and the piano therefore came in strong on occasions of social entertainment.

The pictorial decorations of the flat were dedicated largely to the photographic revelation of Montaigne Belmont's charms. The beautiful façade of the Climax star was represented in this unique gallery in every pose peculiar to his profession. In one huge "ten-by-twelve" the great film favorite sat astride a chair leaning casually over the back and looking at the world beneath the brim of his straw hat. Several other poses showed him in a more thoughtful mood with his hand to his chin looking almost Napoleonic in his worldly detachment. There were several pictures in the new soft focus process, so popular with the camera Rembrandts of that time, which gave Montie a mystical aura of romance. But the picture that Kitty liked best of all, and the one that held the place of honor on her new quarter-sawed oak dresser, showed the

classic head of her hero rising plastically out of a free and open sport shirt with all the distinguished grandeur of Lord Byron at his best. With a dash to the wavy hair and a faraway look in his beautiful cow-eyes, Montie's counterfeit, looking boldly out across Kitty's talcum powder and hairpins, held that susceptible young lady spellbound by the hour, while she dreamed of some day fading out with him in the "final clinch." Yes, it was signed—largely and diagonally across the nether right hand corner. It said: "To my little friend, Kitty Pilky, avec les obligations distingués, Montaigne Belmont." This was followed by a magnificent flourish beneath which was carelessly dashed off the date of the royal presentation.

As for Tessie's contribution to the art of their apartment, the only picture decorating her dresser was a small "cabinet" photograph showing a young fighter in an attitude of fistic defense, but, alas, the signature on the cardboard would not have been legal in a court of law.

"Say, Tess, Jim tells me you're goin' along on that yachtin' story to-morra," announced Kitty as she practiced on the new hair dressing the wardrobe woman had been teaching her that day.

"Yes, but it's jest a doublin' stunt. Looks as though I'd never do enthin' on my own account. I wonder why Driver don't ever give me a part? All I do is stall around in the back with jest now 'n' then a 'bit.' "

"It's yer own fault, Tess, you're too tight acrost the

chest. Why don't you loosen up a bit? It aint goin' to hurt you to be a little more friendly. Jim likes you a lot, but he says you're too ingrowin'."

"Well, I simply don't like it, Kit," was the girl's reply. "I jest can't bear to have that bunch pawin' me all over every time I go by one of 'em. Of course, I suppose I got to let Driver paw me some, b'cause he's the boss; but how can you let all them bum actors put their arms around you is beyond me. I don't mind 'em all 'dearin'' me, but I want 'em to keep their hands off."

"Aw, you're too pertickeler, kid." Kitty took the hand-glass to view her new glory from behind.

"P'raps," said Tessie as she sought out the sporting page of the Sunday paper.

"Say, kiddo," observed Kitty through her mouthful of hairpins, "if you'd read the beauty page and learn what to do with your complexion and cut out lookin' for notices of Jan Morsowski, you'd get along faster."

Tessie only chewed the harder on her gum, while cutting from the paper a story of how Jan had been given a fighting membership in the Olympic Athletic Club.

XII

KITTY and Tessie, looking as smart and nifty as the girls on the magazine covers, stood by the rail of the *Sea Gull* as she steamed gracefully up the Sound. The marvelous metamorphosis that had

taken place in their personal appearance in the few months since they left the Beanery would have added another chapter to Sartor Resartus. Dressed in blue serge skirts with white middy blouses, big gray tams athwart their young heads, white stockings and shoes, no one would have recognized them as the "types" who wore the tight gaudy clothes fashionable below Fourteenth Street. Even Kitty's "spit curls" had vanished and the great Psyche knots that had protruded from the backs of their heads had given way to more classic and youthful hair dressing. Only their vernacular and their insatiable gum chewing linked them with the Bowery.

"Chee, this certainly is the life," said Kitty to her handsome companion, who stood with his arm about her, lest perhaps she should fall overboard. "I guess I was intended for this stuff, I like it s' much."

"You're entitled to it, and you'll have it too, m'deah, if you play the game right. Every pretty girl has got the good things of life coming to her." Montie leaned a little closer in a manner of benevolent protectiveness, and Kitty sighed deliciously.

"Now, Hank," said Driver to his chief assistant, "you're sure that Tessie has got on everything that Miss Cutura wore this morning? We don't want to crab this scene because of the wrong stockin's or sumthin'."

"O.K., Jim. I've checked off every item," and the property man again scrutinized his list, glancing up to

make a mental inventory of Tessie's wardrobe and props.

"All right, tell the Capt'n to heave to, or whatever they do to stop, and we'll shoot this scene with that bunch of rocks in the background. It looks enough like the coast of Africa to suit me."

"Hank," said Tessie, a few moments later when the cameras were set up and everything was in readiness, "I wish you'd stick around to give me a hand in case I get scared or tangled up in the ropes. I aint swam lately and I'm not sure o' myself."

"Don't you worry, little one, I won't let you get drownded," replied Mr. Todd. "You won't be the first skoit I've rescued from the briny deep. That's one of the best things I do."

"All right, now, folks, we'll do the struggle first," announced Driver. "Here, Bill, you're supposed to be tryin' to hold Cutie a prisoner. She's evidently threatened to jump overboard and swim to shore and you're tryin' to stop her. But she breaks away and runs down here where she jumps over the rail. We'll have one camera pick her up in the water and the other'll catch you. As soon as she goes over, register anger, then turn, face the camera and say, 'I'll do it!' Hold it a minute, and—Cut!

"Now, are you folks all ready? . . . All right, then —in yer places—righto! Ready—action—camera! That's it, Bill. Hold yer face away there, Tessie, remember, you're doublin'—that's it, scratch and kick,

bite his ear—that's fine; now give a comedy scowl, Bill. Break! Now beat it, Tess—and over the rail! Fine. Now, Bill, *anger*—'I'll do it!' Cut." Then leaning over the side to direct the water action he said, "That's it; now swim out of the pitcher."

Tessie had indeed risen to the surface, but her frantic actions were utterly unlike those of a swimmer. Tossing her head back and pawing, she seemed bent on trying to climb out of water.

"Look, she cawn't swim, she's going down!" shouted Montaigne Belmont from the rail. "Somebody throw her a life preserver." But before anybody could act, Hank Todd had gone over the rail head-first and in a moment rose to the surface raising Tessie with him.

In the meantime two members of the crew had dropped a dingy and were paddling toward the spot. In less than two minutes after she struck the water, Tessie was lying on the deck, a very frightened and bedraggled young lady.

"I thought you said you c'd swim, dearie," said Driver when she had somewhat recovered from her confusion and had sneezed and coughed up the salt water she had swallowed and inhaled.

"I thought so, too," she replied calmly. "I read once that if you threw a person in, he'd just natcherlly swim—but don't you believe it. It don't woik——"

"Well, I'll be damned!——

"Now get into your dry clothes and we'll jest cruise around a bit," added the director. "We've only got a

few more scenes to shoot with Montie an' Kit an' we're through. Thank God, we don't have to retake that scene."

An hour later, Tessie sat on deck in warm clothes, drying her hair. The sun was dropping low; yet they were still shooting a short scene of Kitty lying luxuriously among the soft cushions under the bow awning.

"Cut! . . . Again, dearie . . . And this time, look down." Driver seemed particularly pleased as Kitty obeyed, but had she not lowered her eyes, she would have observed him pinch the arm of his camera man.

"I'm afraid we can't shoot any more to-day, Mr. Driver," spoke up the obedient crank-turner. "The light's gone," and he looked about him with a puzzled frown.

"What's that? What's that? My Gawd, an' we've got three more scenes to make. Well, of course, if it's gone, it's gone; that's all there is to it. But it means comin' back here to-morra."

"Why couldn't you stay right here, sir, and shoot 'em the first thing in the mornin'? Some of us could go ashore if there isn't room aboard. It'd be a lot cheaper than returnin' the whole works to Brooklyn and then comin' back."

"How about it, girls, would you mind spendin' the night aboard the *Sea Gull?*" asked Driver thoughtfully, as though contemplating his heavy responsibility.

"Oh, I think it would be swell," exclaimed Kitty.

"Stay as long as you like and see if I care," re-

sponded the "utility kid," for Tessie loved the white and polished cleanliness of the yacht and was loath to give it up. It was her first contact with expensive luxury, and she strode the deck in make-believe proprietorship.

As Driver passed Montie amidship, he whispered across the back of his hand, "We stay." And Montie closed one eye slowly and knowingly.

If the former waitresses of the Beanery had known anything about the chartering of a yacht for a day, they might have wondered how it could have been so thoroughly stocked with fresh viands against such an emergency as failing light. But their nautical experience had been confined to those Tammany chowder parties at which there were three thousand guests and tons of "eats"; and besides, they had come to believe in this new magic land where all a director had to say was: "Let there be banquets"—and there were banquets.

And so they never thought beyond the lavish dinner they sat down to that evening—just the four of them gathered about the wicker table under the great striped awning. The rest of the staff and three of the crew had gone ashore, leaving aboard, besides the happy quartet, the cook, engineer and captain.

And such a dinner! Oysters, chicken, asparagus, salad, ice cream and wine, and after it was all cleared away, small coffee, cheese, nuts and fruit. So this was how the rich lived!

"Chee, Tess, ain't it swell?" said Kitty as she luxuriously puffed away on a gold-tipped cigarette.

"You've said it, kid. Who'd ever dreamed six months ago that you and me would of been out splashin' about in a steam yacht like the Vanderbilts. I must say that this kind o' thing makes me wanta purr."

When later on they were sitting snugly on the semicircular seat at the stern, looking off at the myriad lights of the city, while the beautiful yacht rocked gracefully at anchor a half mile from shore, the girls whose lives had been lived among the sordid smells of the Bowery, gave themselves up to dreams of opulence.

Excusing himself for a moment, Montie presently returned with a guitar, and reclining opposite Kitty in a great steamer chair, began to strum out an accompaniment to a song which he sang softly and with real feeling. It was the last note necessary to complete the anæsthesia of this dream night.

"Some day, girls," said the famous actor, during a lull in the music and conversation, "you'll own a yacht of your own—that is, if you get to be real actresses and pull down the big pay. But you're young yet—and you haven't had much experience. Of course, to be successful actresses, you'll have to live!"

"Well, this is living, if you ast me," said Kitty.

"You don't understand what I mean, dearie; you haven't *lived* yet." Montie got up, leaving the guitar in the steamer chair, and took his seat beside Kitty, placing his arm protectingly around her shoulder.

"What do *you* know about *life*, dearie? How do you suppose the great actresses register the mystic complexities d'amour? It is because they have lived and loved —loved and lived."

Thereafter for half an hour Montie delivered a soft, soothing, insinuating monologue explaining profoundly how only through "experience" could artistes hope to interpret the great emotions of life.

There is no doubt that Kitty was tremendously impressed with the reasonableness of Montie's argument; moreover his intimate propinquity stirred her deeply. But something told Tessie that Montie's generosity was not entirely disinterested; and when Jim Driver expressed *his* endorsement of the old, old wheeze by a slight affirmative pressure around her waist, she stood up. "I'll be back in a minute, Jim," she said. "I want to get my sweater," and she stepped down the companionway into the cabin.

Tessie got her sweater, but she did not stop there. Going forward through the galley, she climbed the narrow iron stairs to the forward cabin above the deck.

"Captain," she said to the weather-beaten man sitting in his shirt sleeves reading a book, "couldn't you arrange it so's our berths wouldn't be quite so close to the men?" And the wise old skipper, who had in his day witnessed some very wonderful parties aboard, noted the frightened look on the pale little face before him. All his protective instincts were aroused at once.

"You bet I can. Just leave it to me," he said firmly.

"Then make it soon, for I think I'd like to turn in," and Tessie retreated down the ladder to hurry back, lest Driver should suspect her delay.

When she walked up the companionway, sweater in hand, she beheld Kitty tight in Montie's embrace, while Driver restlessly paced the deck.

"What kept you so long, Tessie?" he asked, confronting her.

"Oh, I was jest powderin' my nose," she answered, laughing.

"Well, come and sit down with your Uncle Jim. I want to talk to you." Taking her by the arm he led her to the vacant end of the semicircular seat on the opposite end of which the other couple were amorously employed.

"My, ain't the lights of the city wonderful," exclaimed Tessie, playing for time.

"Lights, nothin'. Let's talk about——"

"Good evening, mates." It was the captain. "Going to turn in soon?" he asked in his loud, hearty voice, bringing Montie out of his embrace.

"Yes, pretty soon, Capt'n," answered Driver respectfully. "We've got a lot of shootin' to do in the mornin', and must be back at the studio at noon. Have a nightcap?"

"No, thanks. And if the young ladies will follow me, I'll show them to their stateroom. I thought they'd feel more comfortable in the owner's private cabin. He wont care, and it will stop the crew from

talking. I have to be careful about such things, for these sailormen are awful gossips and Mr. Stevens, the owner, is very particular." He winked at the two men, leaving them without grounds for protest. "Come along, girls. Thorpe has put your things in there already."

"Say, what do you think of Capt'n Buttinski, Jim?"

"I have a hunch that Tessie framed this, Montie, and I'll get her for it yet," and Driver mumbled his profanity all the way to his cabin.

. . . . . .

As the strange guests of Mr. Stevens' hospitality partially undressed in his luxurious stateroom that night, not a word was spoken. By the psychic intuition possessed by all women, each knew exactly what was in the other's mind, and their thoughts were entirely inharmonious.

Long after Kitty had gone alcoholically to sleep, Tessie lay on her back and chewed her gum and thought. Yes—she would have to look out for herself. She was evidently in a profession where a girl was supposed to "play the game or get out." Those were exactly Driver's words. Well, maybe she could pretend to play it or play around it, or something. Anyway, she would resort to every defense before she would give in—or get out.

Tessie's ability to take care of herself in a crisis had been developed in her at a very early age, for she had not yet reached adolescence when she found herself

adrift in the great city of New York. And during the dangerous years of her budding womanhood she had not only looked out for herself, but had thus far guided Kitty around the rocks of temptation. Of her father she had no recollection whatever, he having died—perhaps fortunately—when she was two years old. But her mother, who struggled along as an actress to her death six years later, must have been a woman of fragile charm but quiet force, for Tessie's memory of her was one of profound admiration and understanding. Her uncle, her father's brother, under whose malt and spirituous mercies she spent her youth until she ran away to work in a hat factory, used to say, with magnificent disgust, that Tessie "was just like her mother." Evidently Tessie's inheritance was one of character, and somewhere along the way she had picked up a full set of brains—untrained culturally as yet—but nevertheless receptively alert, and already serving to protect this little daughter who otherwise would be so pitifully unprotected and uncared for. It was in just such emergencies as this present situation that the young girl's wits had often seen her through.

Breakfasting next morning with two very sullen 'artists,' Tessie wondered if Driver suspected her of spoiling the party. "Well, we soitenly were well chaperoned, weren't we, Jim?" she said by way of misleading him, and her strategy worked, for Driver became very puzzled as to her possible guilt. Oh, well, there were other times coming, was the thought with which

he solaced himself. Curiously enough, the Climax director discovered he had had enough "yacht stuff" without further shooting, and the party returned immediately to the studio.

XIII

EARLY patrons of the pictures will recall a certain Katherine Granville who played opposite Montaigne Belmont in a series of domestic dramas released by the old Climax Film Company. Though offering no serious histrionic competition with Margaret Anglin, Mrs. Fiske, or even Cutie Cutura, Katherine possessed a soft valentiney beauty that was enormously popular with the cinema habitués of that time. Surprising as it may seem, this fortunate young lady, upon whom the gods smiled so kindly, was none other than Miss Kitty Pilky, former waitress in the Pork and Beanery on lower Bowery.

To those working on the Climax lot, Kitty's sudden rise was no surprise. The devotion of the great Belmont explained, and apparently, justified it.

It was only a short time after the unfinished adventure on the yacht *Sea Gull* that Kitty moved to another flat, much larger and handsomer than the little three-roomed box she and Tessie had occupied. Furthermore, she began to wear stunning clothes and even drove to the studio in her own car. She was now a lead, drawing two hundred dollars a week, which of

course automatically elevated her to a social equality with Cutie Cutura and Mabel Trenwith, the two other feminine stars of the Climax constellation.

Naturally, there was much jealousy among the underlings of this corner of Movieland, for nowhere in the world are there greater caste distinctions, and in no other field of endeavor are the compensations so wide apart. The "Fatimas" of Montie's "harem," who used to cluster at his feet, and whom, for the sheer joy of their worshipful admiration, he took on every location whether they were to appear in the scenes or not—yes, even these favored pets now sank into the obscurity that was theirs by natural inheritance, now that the king had chosen his consort,—and they were quite naturally jealous.

"I don't know what he sees in that pinhead," indignantly sniffed Allie Peters. "She can't act fer soup —did ye see her tryin' to emote in the bedroom scene yesterday? She looked like a sick cat, and even when Todd give her the glycerine tear gun, her cryin' looked like she was laughin'."

Even though the artificiality of Kitty's position now compelled her to keep aloof from her defeated sisters, she still had a sneaking devotion for Tessie, and fear of her, this latter based upon the fact that Tessie alone knew the truth of their juvenile court experience. No, it would not do to be snippy with Tessie—she might "spill"—and then Kitty's bubble would burst.

Though no actual break in their friendship ensued,

Tessie saw much less of the girl whom she had helped weather the most dangerous period of her life.

But perhaps this was just as well, for the separation gave Tessie time and opportunity to become better acquainted with the McGowans, who now were her most intimate friends. Night after night, when Kitty was over in New York splashing around in lobster palaces, Tessie was going to the movies or sitting in the little home of "the Macs" over in Flatbush.

One night, however, when Montie stayed over in New York, Kitty invited her to dinner in her flat.

"Gee, Kit, this is sure wonderful. Think of you wearin' all these gorgeous rags, an' lollin' around in rugs an' lace curtains, an' with a servant. It seems like it was all a fairy tale." Taking a chocolate wrapped in gold foil from a huge Chinese box standing on a carved tabouret beside her, Tessie lay back in the silken pillows of the great divan and luxuriated.

"Well, Tess, you c'd have all this too, if you would," answered the silken-robed leading lady, languidly lighting a cigarette.

"Yes, I s'pose so," replied the younger girl. "Say, Kit," she went on, by way of diversion, "let's see your clothes. You must have trunks of 'em by what I see you sportin' around the lot."

For an hour Tessie stood immersed in a sea of chiffon and laces that fairly intoxicated her with their beauty and their perfume.

"You know, Tess," said Kitty, "you've only got

one life to live; and after all, Driver ain't so bad."

"Well, maybe you're right, Kit, but somehow I jest don't like the idee. I'd rather marry a fella like Jan, and spend my time patchin' up his nose than do this."

"Still dreamin' about that poor pug? Say, Tess, you'll never grow up. But if you ast me, I think you're passin' up the big chanct."

"Well, I'm goin' to enjoy my dreams, fer a while—anyway."

As the days went on and Tessie saw the ever-growing ascendency of Kitty and her own inability to get beyond the mere position of "utility," she began to wonder if dreaming was all there was to life, and if after all, it was so tremendously worth while. She craved beauty and she could have it all, if she would "play the game." But there was something she craved even more; she could not have named it herself, but it had a spiritual quality not quite expressed by laces and limousines.

In the midst of Tessie's perplexities another blow fell—the Macs were going to leave.

"I've been offered a good position with a new company that is building a studio in California," the beaming publicity man of the Climax explained to her one day. "That seems to be the natural place for this industry, and we're going out to grow up with it."

"Chee, I wish I was goin' along; couldn't you take me, Mac? I'll trail along as a maid to Mrs. Mac or any old thing you want."

"No, Tessie, I've got to feel my own way first. I couldn't take the responsibility. You stick around here for a couple of years and learn the game, and then perhaps we can send for you. But listen!" and McGowan pointed a fat finger right at her nose. "You just hold tighter'n 'ell to the All-Good, and behave yourself, and you'll arrive yet. D'y'u understand?" Tessie nodded.

"I couldn't very well tell you before because I was working here," Mac continued, "but the Climax has the worst reputation of any studio in the east, and I'm hoping you will get with one of the other companies as soon as you can. You don't want to trail Kitty, do you?"

"Not fer a hat full of di'monds," retorted Tessie instantly.

"Well, there are a few Jims and Monties in every business, and you have landed in a place where they have made their game fashionable all over the lot. These devils are drunk with power now, but they won't last, the pictures are too fine to be corrupted by a few rotten apples. Grab off all the experience you can, take care of your health, and don't get to living messy and you'll land yet."

"I promise," replied Tessie, averting her face in a futile effort to conceal her tears. "When are you going, Mac? Can I come to the train to see you both off?"

Little did the McGowans realize when Tessie ac-

companied them across to the Pennsylvania Station how much they meant to the little, boyish-figured girl beside them.

"D'y mind if I kiss you good-bye?" asked Tessie as she stood by the gate, and when they laughingly complied, and hurriedly offered some last advice, they did not note the flood of tears that was ready to burst as soon as they passed out of sight.

XIV

WITH the departure of the McGowans and the social elevation of Kitty, Tessie now found herself shaken down to the stratum to which the forces of her new life were conspiring to keep her. After all, she said to herself, who was she that she should complain? Fifteen a week was more than she would ever make in The Beanery, and the work *was* fun, and outside of an occasional wetting or a hard bump in a doubling scene, not so bad.

But it was galling at times to play 45th fiddle to her old side-partner Kitty, who every day was becoming more remote and upstage. Besides, Tessie didn't care much for the "Fatimas," though she was supposed to be in their set. She liked the character people best. She found them for the most part homey and well intentioned, some of them disillusioned, and a few embittered. But in spite of their jealousies of the stars, they had many splendid virtues;—at least they could

act, a quality apparently unnecessary among the baby-dolls.

Tessie now began to enter into the lives of the technical staff, even "stepping out" with big Hank Todd on one occasion. Her social life even extended to New York, where she went to a dance given by the camera men over in that fashionable city, an event that was destined to have curious consequences.

"Sure I'll go, Willie," she had said to the happy camera-kid, working with Filson in the Driver pictures. "Even if I ain't a cow-eyed madonna, you won't be ashamed of me, for I'll have on a dress right out of Tiff'nay's window."

Tessie remembered Kitty's telling her, in a burst of generosity, to help herself to her "pretties" at any time, and though the new star and Montie on this day were over in Jersey shooting a tumultuous western—with bang-tailed livery horses!—she knew where the key to the flat hung. On the evening of the dance Willie called for her at that "swell" address.

Tessie's toilette was, fortunately for her, rather sketchy—one does not go in for Paquin gowns on fifteen a week. But Kitty's hidden treasure, upon which she had set her heart, would easily conceal the sartorial lapses beneath, for it was a light blue mandarin coat of elastic size and universal fit.

From the lower drawer of a wardrobe-trunk Tessie unfolded the handsome brocade, and when she donned it and stood before the mirror, she looked almost beau-

tiful. In fact, to her shined-up suitor, she was as ravishing as any queen of the movies. So proud was Willie, in fact, that he blew himself to one of the new taxicabs.

"Holy Cat, Tessie, but you do look swell!" said he in appreciation as she took her seat beside him in the yellow chariot. It was Tessie's first ride in a cab, and she felt like Cinderella going to the royal ball.

The party turned out to be a joyous, unconventional affair, at which were danced the Texas Tommy, the Bunny Hug, and other popular steps that had drifted across country from the Barbary Coast of San Francisco, but had achieved semirespectability by their Metropolitan acceptance.

Returning home at two A.M., Willie, intoxicated with his social triumph in having exhibited to his acquaintances Katherine Granville's best friend, attempted a few amorous liberties with his partner of the evening, but his efforts were so naïvely youthful that Tessie only laughed.

"You're all right, Willie. But the snuggle stuff is out." Willie blushingly withdrew to his corner, insisting that he didn't mean it "a-tall."

Though Tessie assured her young cavalier that she'd had "one coiking time," she little guessed what her pretty appearance that night was to cost her.

All during the weeks that followed the yachting trip Driver had treated Tessie with indifference. That was

the method he employed for bringing her to time. Given little work and few opportunities to distinguish herself, he thought he could artistically, as well as financially, starve her into being "good."

"The kid is crazy to act, but she can't act for me, unless she 'programs,'" he said to Kitty and Montie at dinner one evening. "There's lots of better lookin' girls than she is who will do anything to get in the pitchers."

There was, however, something elusively challenging in Tessie's detachment that stirred Driver's sporting instincts. Driver was Anglo-Saxon, or perhaps just masculinely human, and his desires were sharpened by the difficulty of the chase.

"Well, perhaps, now that you turned down her request for a raise, she'll feel bettah about it than she did at first," added Montie.

"From somethin' she said to me, I think she's beginnin' to weaken," ventured Kitty, "let's try her out again. We four could have some wonderful times t'gether."

The next day Tessie was stopped by Kitty on her way to the dressing room.

"Tessie, to-morra's Sunday, and I'm goin' to be alone; so come on home with me to-night and we'll have a good old visit, and then sleep as long as we please in the mornin', eh, what?"

"Fine, Kitty, that'll be great fun. C'n I bring my own kind of gum?" Tessie answered happily.

It was indeed luxurious to be served a splendid dinner by a colored maid and then to peel off and loll about in a filmy silk negligeé. Tessie almost reproached herself for her silly "dream." "I think I'll have jest one drink and a cigarette to see how it seems" she said after a long lapse of contemplation. Liquor and smoking did not seem to hurt Kitty; and if anything, she was prettier than ever. Nor did her relationship with Montie seem such a shocking thing to her soul. Kitty treated the arrangement as perfectly normal. "After all," thought Tessie, "perhaps I am taking life too seriously. Montie may have been right. We have only one life to live—why not live it?"

As Tessie was sipping her first drink, a knock came at the door.

"Who is it?" asked Tessie. "Don't let 'em in!"

"I'll see," answered her hostess, rising and slipping the latch.

"Well, well, see who's heah!" beamed Montie genially, as he entered, followed by Jim Driver. "I didn't have to go after all, and so I brought Jim ovah. I didn't expect to find you heah, Tessie. Welcome to our city."

"Wait jest a minute please while I go in an' slip on some clothes," said Tessie, withdrawing to her appointed bedroom. "I'll be back in a minute."

"Aw, that's all right, dearie, we won't tell," said Driver. But Tessie kept right on, and locked the door.

"Well, go ahead and put on your sealskins if you want. We're here for the evenin' anyhow," he called after her.

Once inside the room, Tessie began to do some high pressure thinking. There was something about Kitty's manner that made her feel she was being framed, and there was a sinister look in Driver's eyes that she knew meant trouble. "I guess I'll take no chances," she said to herself; and raising the blinds and sash, she saw that by walking along the coping, she could easily reach the fire escape.

Quickly slipping into her clothes, all but her skirt, which she tossed over to the iron balcony, she climbed out, and by pressing close to the building, was able to walk along a projecting sill until she grasped the rail of the fire escape. Climbing over it, she put on her skirt, ran down the two ladders, and reaching the first balcony, which she had forgotten was always ladderless, let herself down to a hanging position, and dropped to the street. Her training as a "stunt girl" had not been in vain. In half an hour she was back in her own room.

It was all over now—she knew it. Driver would be furiously indignant—would make her life a hell, even if he permitted her to remain. Furthermore, he would pretend innocence. Well, she would go to one of the other studios. She would have done it before, but for the dread necessity of the probation arrangements.

Driver was at work on the set the next morning

when he saw Tessie enter one of the dressing rooms of "Peacock Row."

"Hey, Beatty," he called, "tell Miss Boggs I want to see her on the set right away."

"Driver's on the warpath this morning and this is where Tessie gets hers," spoke up "Old Man" Hayes, the character actor. There was an ominous silence as Tessie walked, accompanied by Beatty, across the great wooden stage.

"Why ain't you on the set in make-up? Do you see what time it is?" asked Driver with repressed anger, as Tessie stood before him and the whole Climax crew.

"Because I'm leavin'; I didn't think you wanted me any more," answered Tessie timidly.

"You bet you are leaving—you—you—dam little thief. We've been on your trail fer some time, young lady, missin' things from the wardrobe department. The last one was a fine blue mandarin coat that cost two hundred dollars, and s'help me, you had the nerve to wear it where there was movie people present." Tessie went white—she grasped the situation instantly. Kitty had been up to her old tricks; but of course—no, she couldn't tell that. What else Driver said she could only guess. She heard the words "Juvenile Court" and "delinquent," and she was stunned with the public announcement of her disgrace; but when in a final burst of anger he called her a name that would have caused a worm to turn, Tessie

straightened up and slapped the great director a resounding smack across the mouth.

With a roar like a mad bull, the infuriated Driver lunged forward to strike the girl, but she dodged, and as he once again struck out, something deterred him in his progress—suddenly and effectively. Hank Todd, the property man, had been patiently waiting to land a complimentary wallop, and the occasion and the time seemed most propitious.

The blow that floored the director would have killed a less sturdy animal, and it was sufficient to paralyze Driver's corticle centers for some time. After making sure that the offender was *hors de combat*, Hank Todd expectorated most ungallantly, and then, raising his hand to the camera man, said in mock seriousness, "Cut!—we'll call this a day." Then taking the shaking Tessie by the hand he walked off the set.

"Get your stuff, little one. I guess we're fired," he said, as he shooed her into her dressing room.

XV

IF Hank Todd had been a prize fighter, he would not have had to hire a sparring partner. Mrs. Todd, fair, fat and under forty, could have kept him fit as a fiddle. When she learned of the morning's brawl, she was all for returning instantly and finishing the job.

"Struck at this little girl, eh? Well, Hennery, I

don't think you did very much in defense of the weaker sect. Why didn't you bat his brains out? I wish I'd a been there."

"Then, Ma, if you'd wanted me to defend the weaker sect, I'd a had to hit *you*, and I'm not in fer sewersidin' yet," and Hank patted his indignant spouse proudly. "No, we did as well as we could fer a coupla amatoors. Tessie and I between us give him the count. And it was a pop'lar decision, judgin' by the actions of the crowd. The question now is what to do about Tessie."

"Hennery has told me all about them stunts you did over there, dearie, so I guess you'll have no trouble landin' with one of the other companies at Fort Lee or over in New York."

"No, Mrs. Todd, I'm through with the movie game. Driver'll tell 'em about the mandarin coat and how I'm on probation in the Juvenile Court. I might live down bein' a 'delinquent,' judgin' by most of the crowd, but a 'thief!' No, that's too much, even with those highbinders."

"Mebbe they've swore out a warrant for my arrest, too," and Hank laughed till the dinner dishes rattled.

"Nobody knows me over here in Newark," went on Tessie, ignoring the explosive interruption.

"An' as for sidesteppin' the N'York police," added Hank, "you couldn't be in a safer place 'n Newark. It's lucky I never gave 'em my N'Jersey address. They think I live in that room over there in Brooklyn. I'll

get back with the varnish company where I belong, and we can get Tessie a job down at Frank's Place near the railway station. Oh, I guess we didn't make such a bad break after all."

So frightened was she, and so anxious to get away after Driver's shameful disclosure that she would not have returned to her room at all—if it had not been for one thing! Rushing madly up the stairs she secured a photograph from her dresser—the photograph of a fighting chap known as "The Polish Cyclone."

Tessie's short meteoric flight toward the stars was but a momentary thing in the cosmos of the dramatic heavens, and when at last she came to earth in the wilds of Newark, her eclipse was total. Few knew whence she came or cared little whither she had gone. Only one faint spark flew back after she had struck bottom. Katherine Granville received this note.

"Dear Kit:

"Get rid of that blue coat before they find you out. You shouldn't of taken it, Kit. That stuff will sure get you wrong some day. I've seen you through twice now, but you'll have to go it alone from now on, for I'm through. I'll watch for your pitchers and hope you will get on well. You sure had a bum start having no parents. But for the love of Mike, Kit, hang weights on them light fingers of yours. Good-by, Kit, some day I'll take you and Montie fishing on *my* yacht.

"Jan's up in Boston fighting in a torneyment. There's a swell pitcher of him in the Sunday *World*.

"Tessie."

"Who's your lettah from, dearie?" asked Montaigne Belmont while polishing up his puttees.

"Oh, jest another fan, writin' fer my pitcher," answered Kitty with a yawn. Then, tearing the missive into four parts, she threw them into the grate.

XVI

FOR a fellow whose life was as full and colorful as Jan Morsowski's, it was hardly to be expected that the slight ruffle in the Pork and Beanery would have given him another thought. The fact was, however, the unpleasant little episode sat rather heavily on his conscience, for he often wondered if "the little blonde girl" had lost her job on his account. Furthermore, even the greatest of men feel flattered to find their photographs on a lady's altar. So one day at his lunch hour, as he was passing the Pork and Beanery, his curiosity impelled him to brave Dorgan's wrath in order to learn the truth.

"Where's the boss?" he asked the girl at the cash register.

"He's not in, sir. Enthin' I kin do fer you?"

"Yes, tell me," answered Jan, "where are those two

young girls that used to work in here—the little blonde and the big one with the spit curls?"

"Oh, Boggs and Pilky? Why, they're in the Juvenile Court, so Doigan tells me. He says they robbed the cash register. But I don't believe it, if you ast me. I think Doigan told me that jest to throw a scare into me. But mebbe it's true at that."

In any event the girls had lost their jobs—that was enough; so Jan walked over to the police court to see if by any chance Dorgan had told the truth. Fortunately Jan's position in the fistic world had made him acquainted with most of the politicians on the East Side, so when he walked in upon Judge Jackson, his Honor declared a recess immediately.

"Well, Jan, how are you?" he asked, calling his distinguished visitor to his desk. "What can I do for you?"

"I came to ask about a couple of girls named Boggs and Pilky. Were they ever committed from your court?"

"Those names are faintly familiar, Jan. Wait a minute." And going to a filing cabinet in the next room, he began to finger through the "B's" in a card catalog. "Yes, here it is," he said, returning. "I remember now. Funny case—robbing a cash register. The little one was scared to death, but was a good sport and would have gone to jail before she would have squealed on the big one, who was transparently the thief. Couldn't convict, of course, so I ordered them to report

to the probation officer for six months. It's extralegal, but it won't hurt them. The card says they are now working at The Climax Studio over in Brooklyn. I'm sorry, too, for that place gives us more trouble than all the others put together. If you want to know anything more, Mrs. Davis, across the hall, will give you the dope. Well, I won a ten spot on your last fight, Jan. When do you——"

As Wilson's Printshop closed at noon on Saturday, Jan decided to take a run over to the Climax to see what he could see. As a local celebrity, and a "veteran" of the films himself (had he not appeared in a Climax picture?), he knew he would be welcome; besides it would be a pleasant way to kill an afternoon. Driver was on location he was informed at the office, and Miss Boggs had left; but after a moment's telephoning—Miss Granville—she *was* Miss Pilky—would be delighted to see the famous Mr. Morsowski in her dressing room.

It was evident to Jan, as soon as he beheld the former waitress, that she needed no help from him, and if any blame attached to him for her loss of her job at the Beanery, it was only that he had caused her to be kicked upstairs. But for some reason the dreamy-eyed fighter was not favorably impressed with Kitty's newly acquired splendor; he had seen too many similar miracles in the social life of the East Side. Nor was he exactly pleased with the movie lady's attitude toward her old friend.

"No, Tessie was an awful pinhead, Mr. Morsowski. She's a nice goil an' all that, but she'll never amount to enthin', fer she don't know how to play the game. She got into a jam here a few weeks ago and got canned. But you needn't worry; she kin always get a job waitin' table; there's where she's good. No, I ain't the slightest idee where she is."

Wandering casually among the sets, Jan was recognized by many of the hands, and they greeted him cordially. Suddenly he spied Spike Toomey, a grips, and an old friend. Perhaps Spike would know.

"She left here with Hank Todd," said Toomey after reciting the incidents leading up to the famous brawl, "and I suspect she's hidin' with the Todds over in Jersey, fer Driver threatened to have her pinched fer stealin' a coat from the wardrobe. But take it from me, Jan, she never done it. That kid was a sport an' a thoroughbred if there ever was one, an' there wasn't a man on the lot but wouldn't 'a' torn his shirt for her. She was a friend of your'n, wasn't she?"

"Yes," answered the young fighter slowly. "Where in Jersey does Todd live?"

"Sh-h-h. It's Newark, I'm pretty sure. He yusta work at the Murphy Varnish factory."

"Thanks, Spike." And with a cordial handshake Jan was off.

XVII

TESSIE'S job at Frank's Place was not altogether a success. It had all the hard work and bad smells of the Pork and Beanery without any of its gayety. Nor was it a social clearing house where parties met to dine, or even where two patrons sat gossiping over their small coffee. People came to Frank's to eat, and get out. It was just one of the interminable "popular priced" feeding stations along life's journey. "Waffles and hot cakes" in the morning, "entrées ready to serve" at noon, and at night the left over entrées (with perhaps the "braised short ribs and mashed potatoes" blue-penciled from the list) and the usual short orders—"a ribber, medium," leading all the selections.

As the days went on and Tessie's work at the restaurant became more and more monotonous, she grew restless and nervous. Her short spectacular splash into the hectic life of the Climax Studio, followed by waiting table in a Newark "eating dump," was like being sent back to prison after a day's freedom. She had arrived at the modest Todd home with indignation and disgust for her employers, but as her movie experience began to recede into perspective, she seemed to forget the roughness of it, and remembered only the bubbles. At night particularly, as she lay in bed looking out upon an interminable tangle of chimneys and telegraph

poles, she would live over again those happy, happy days. It was not long before the wondrous adventure began to take on the quality of a dream. It was hard to realize she had ever experienced it. With a craving for the beautiful things of life, yet sentenced by chance to the sordid ugliness of watching vulgar people eating all day, Tessie sat stuffily in a smelly cinema in the evening, and then at night contemplated from her dingy window the back yard of a great industrial city.

Lying stickily outside the covers in order to keep cool, her active young mind would become a phantasma of brilliant lights and deep shadows. She would think of Annie Strunsky, who "went wrong," as they called it, yet as "Olga Trent" had lived a whirlwind life of yachts, servants, race horses, champagne, silk stockings, and diamond tiaras. It is true Hester Smith had started down the same primrose path and had been found dead in a "hop joint" down in Chinatown, but then there was Kitty, who only a few months back was no better off than she was, and now look at her, driving from her swell apartment in a great new Duroc car. Why couldn't she be somebody in this world, and have these things? Then she would think of Jan, healthy, upright and chivalrous, and she would picture herself romantically strolling through the world hand-in-hand with her hero.

It was always after thinking of Jan that she knew why she couldn't have Kitty's luxuries. Her own pov-

erty was ugly, but somehow the popular way—Kitty's way—to beautiful things was uglier still.

Tessie's code was not one of conscious morality. Maybe she had heard the Ten Commandments, but if so, she was unimpressed. She made her decisions in life from no such lofty judgments. She wouldn't steal because stealing was "cheap"; she wouldn't "play the game," even though the reward was magnificent, because "she didn't like that stuff"; yet by refusing to play she achieved poverty, and she hated poverty, not because it was wrong, but because it was "ugly." It was all very puzzling.

Like our supreme judges who are surreptitiously writing scenarios, and all boarding school girls who have learned Juliet's part by heart, Tessie had within her the universal craving for self-expression. She had it as a youngster playing a make-believe princess enthroned on a pyramid of empty beer kegs in the cellar of her uncle's saloon; she exercised it joyously in the Beanery after hours, with perfect imitations of the unique patrons; but now that she had had a real taste of drama—canned though it was—her urge became an obsession.

"I jest know I c'n act, if I ever get a chance," she would say. "Haven't I thought up some good business when they gave me a comedy part?" Then getting out of bed she would stand before the broken mirror and try out the whole gamut of expressions necessary to register an emotion. Night after night she went

through these dramatic calisthenics, and one day at a secondhand book store she bought a great work entitled: "How to Become an Actress in Ten Weeks." She puzzled through it, but the result was not promising. The night she finished the book she went and saw a picture in which Kitty was cast as the rich heroine. When she went home she cried herself to sleep.

Tessie had bravely stood her æsthetic starvation for a month. Then she came home one night in a joyous spirit.

"Hank, I'm going to Califoinya."

"Californy! For the love of Mike, how are you goin' to make the grade to Californy? That's some trip, kiddo."

"I know, but I got it fixed. Maggie Peterson, down at Frank's, has told me how I can work my way across. It'll take time, but I'll get there some day."

"But what's the big idee, Tessie? Ain't you happy here? You got a pretty fair job, an' Frank tells me you're a crackerjack."

"Well, the truth is," she went on, with the first color they had seen in her cheeks for weeks, "I wanta get back in the movies. There's a new company started out in Los Angeles, the one that Mac has gone to, and I'm sure he could get me a job there. I'd change my name and I'll be so far from Driver that they'll not likely hear that I'm a juvenile courter." Tessie was so exhilarated she could even joke about the thing she dreaded most.

"I don't blame you a bit, Tessie," put in the genial Mrs. Todd. "You're too bright to be waitin' table, but how are you going to get clear to Californy?"

"I've got enough to get to Chicago and that's all I need," answered Tessie, taking out some railroad folders. "Then I get a job with the Harvey people, who have a string a' eatin' houses all the way to the Coast. The goils have a reg'lar scheme of woikin' from one place to another 'til they get out."

"D'you need any help gettin' to Chicago, kid?" asked "Hennery," at a knowing wink from his wife.

"Not a bean! Maggie's goin' with me as far as Chicago. We've got enough, and a real job when we get there."

XVIII

FOR a youngster whose geographic cosmos had lain within a fifty mile radius of the Bowery, Chicago was merely a name. Tessie had been to Larchmont on location, twice she had entrained for Far Rockaway, and once she had ferried over to Staten Island, and now she was in Newark, all of which made her a much-traveled person from East Side standards.

Of course, she had heard of other cities "like Albany and Philadelphia and Indiana." They were places lying about the map that people sometimes went to, always returning to New York. But Chicago! O, yes, come to think about it, she knew all about Chicago.

It was a wonderful place for baseball, and there were thousands and thousands of cattle there. In fact, she pictured it as a place over which every dusty road entering it was jammed with cows, cowboys herding them along the way. Then it was windy. On her beloved sporting page it was called "the Windy City"; and she coupled in her mind the wind and the cow caravans kicking up clouds of dust, and the picture of Chicago thus evolved was far from alluring. But after all, it was only a hopping off place for California, where oranges grew, and palms were everywhere. Furthermore, the McGowans were there, and that fact alone made her anxious to be on her way.

It is not easy for the much-traveled grown-ups of these motor driven days to realize the thrills that lay ahead of Tessie as she got aboard the night train for Chicago. Pretending a great nonchalance to the Todds, who were down to see her off, even her initial experience was a novel adventure, for Tessie had never seen the inside of a sleeping car.

"Remember, Tessie Boggs is now taking a train for nowhere, and she's never comin' back." Then getting their heads together, she whispered impishly, "But some day you'll get a letter signed by a name you've never seen before—but you'll know who it's from. But don't you tell—now promise."

"Never a word, kiddo, don't you worry," Hank reassured her. "But say now, on the level, can't I slip you a five or a ten? You're sure you got enough?"

"Of course I have," Tessie replied, slapping him on the back.

"Good-by, dearie, and God bless you," added Mrs. Todd with a tear in each eye, as she kissed her.

No sooner had the Todds stepped from the train than it began to move, and Tessie glued her face to the window to wave a last good-by, but she saw no more of them; instead, as her window passed slowly by one of the big station lights, she gazed down straight into the eyes of Mrs. Davis, who was pantomiming frantically to her.

Drawing back as though Mrs. Davis' hands were reaching for her, Tessie crouched in a corner of the seat and looked up at Maggie Peterson, who had just managed to make the train.

"Heavens, child, what is the matter?" asked her motherly companion.

"She's outside on the platform now—Mrs. Davis, the probation officer. "Oh, Maggie, Maggie, don't let her take me away!" and Tessie reached up and grasped the lapels of the older woman's coat.

"Well, she'll have to call out the reserves if she wants to get you off Maggie Peterson. Anyway, it's too late now, for we're off. Come, we'll sit in the dressin' room while the dinge makes up our berth."

Tessie little realized the importance of Mrs. Davis' pilgrimage to Newark that night. Had the police-woman arrived five minutes sooner, or had Tessie understood one eloquent gesture Mrs. Davis tried to

signal to her through the window, the whole course of her life would have been changed.

Though Tessie had not seen the Todds, they had witnessed the little parting drama from the station platform, and returned home on the street car very much disturbed at the discordant note in Tessie's departure. Childless themselves, they had not begun to realize until now how much she had come to mean in their empty lives. "How do you suppose they found she was up here, and that she was takin' this train?" asked the moist-eyed spouse of the ex-property man after they had returned home.

"Mebbe she wasn't lookin' for Tessie at all," responded Hank comfortingly. "There's lots of wards of the Juvenile Court, and they're always makin' their get-away. Perhaps she was lookin' fer somebody else entirely, and jest happened to see Tessie and waved to her."

"No, Hank, somethin' tells me that Driver's goin' to get his revenge on that little girl yet. This thing to-night is part of it."

"Aw, rats, Minn, what'ud Driver be chasin' a little freckle-faced bean shooter around the country for? Fergit that stuff. You wimmin are so darned suspicious. Driver's forgotten that kid already."

"All right, Hennery, but just you wait," she answered, with stubborn assurance.

Tessie sat in the corner of the dressing room for a

long time after their berth had been made up, telling Maggie that she didn't feel sleepy yet, and wished to look out the window. Maggie was asleep when she finally climbed up the ladder into "upper seven."

"Hey, kid, at least take off your skirt an' shoes an' hat; whadda 'spose this is—a park bench?" murmured Maggie drowsily.

"Sure, I'll peel. But you didn't expect me to undress down there in the lobby, did you?"

"Well, forty of us did, like forty ostriches, with our heads behind the curtains, but the rest of us in the aisle."

"Men and women?"

"Sure."

"Aint they got any sense of shame?"

"Not when travelin' Pullman. Heave-to there, now, I wanta go to sleep."

But sleep did not come easily to the active mind of the young fugitive. The dynamic sensation of the rushing, gently swaying train at times almost terrified her. How could the engineer know where he was going in the awful blackness of the night? And how would he know what might be ahead? She welcomed the occasional click-click, click-click of the wheels, for then she knew they were running by a switch, and no doubt there were lights there to guide them on their journey.

Then there was a great relief in the knowledge that every mile was taking her farther and farther away

from Mrs. Davis and Driver, and Dorgan and Kitty, and the Beanery, and Frank's Place, and bringing her nearer and nearer to Chicago.

Lying on her back in the semidarkness, Tessie began to note the stenciled decorations on the curved ceiling overhead. The artist had started to make a bird of some kind, but when he got to the wing tips and tail feathers, he had wandered off into twisted ribbons which followed out and made a decorative border around the panel.

"You're a silly old thing," smiled Tessie drowsily, "but I guess you can look after this till mornin'," and reaching up, she stuck a wad of overchewed gum right on the beak of the stenciled bird. In ten minutes she was asleep.

It was at breakfast that Tessie for the first time had a chance to see the country.

"Heavens, I never knew there was so much land, Maggie—and trees! Who planted 'em all, I'd like to know?"

"Well, if you think there is land here, wait'll you go through Kansas and some of them western states. Say, this aint nothin'!" But it was as much as Tessie could encompass at one sitting. She had eaten only half an egg when the waiter removed the dishes.

Long before she reached Chicago, Tessie's preconception of the country had been very much altered. She had seen enough cities en route to believe they were all pretty much alike, and Illinois didn't seem so

greatly unlike New Jersey, except there was more of it. When the train pulled into the suburbs of the "Windy City" there wasn't a breath of wind, and she looked in vain for cows and cowboys.

Arriving in the great station, the train came to a quiet stop, and as the passengers made their slow way toward the exit, Tessie leaned across an empty seat to survey her surroundings. She drew back suddenly. Outside by the steps stood a police officer, scrutinizing every passenger as he alighted.

XIX

"MAGGIE," Tessie said tremulously, "that man is here to arrest me. Mrs. Davis saw me aboard and has telegraphed. What'll I do?"

"Well, kid," answered the unshocked Miss Peterson, "I don't know what it is all about, but you just amble up through the next car, drop into the crowd and beat it to this address. Here, gimme your trunk check. I'll meet you in an hour."

Any other girl dumped into the lap of a great metropolis might have stood about the station bewildered and overwhelmed, but not Tessie Boggs. Her upbringing on the East Side of New York had given her an initiative and an assurance that was anything but confused. A taxicab was the easiest thing, but jealous of the cost, she seized upon a newsboy who directed her clearly and colloquially to her street car, and told

her where to transfer. In twenty minutes, breathless but relieved, she was at the appointed address, which turned out to be a boarding house where Maggie was well known. True to her promise, her companion joined her within the hour.

"Well, kid, I guess we've lost the cop all right. I left him talkin' to the conductor. I'm not so sure he was lookin' for you anyway. But I beat it right over to the Harvey Employment Bureau and signed you up. You're to go through to Topeka. They'll take your fare out of your salary of twenty a month, at the rate of ten per, and feed you all the way acrost."

"How about my trunk? Where is it?" asked Tessie, smiling at Maggie's motherly efficiency.

"I had to turn that in when I got your ticket," she replied. "They send it on to the manager at Topeka. That's so's a girl can't scalp her transportation.

"By the way, kid," Maggie went on seriously, "I signed you up as Teresa Bowdick. Hope you'll like the name, but I had to think quick. It'll fit your initials if you've got any marks or anything. Now remember—Bowdick; mebbe you'd better write it down."

"Maggie, you're an old dear," beamed Tessie, throwing her arms about her. "I like that name Teresa—it's got more class than Tessie."

"Now beat it," commanded Maggie quite unresponsive to the girl's salute. "Your train goes out at ten-thirty this evening, and you'll have to get a few things in the way of clothes. All fixed fer coin?"

"I've got twenty-seven sixty-five," replied Tessie proudly.

XX

WHEN the "Ten-thirty" pulled out of Chicago that night Tessie severed her last tie with the East. Born and brought up within the narrow limits of the most densely populated district in America, she was now entering upon a world as different in character as it was bewildering in its immensity. As one of the waitresses of the Harvey Eating Houses scattered along the Santa Fé, she was to become a shifting unit in a social life that stretched over two thousand miles of country.

"So you're starting in at Topeka?" asked the dining conductor, handing back her meal pass at breakfast. "Well, I quit you at K.C., but I wish you'd tell Hazel Warren that Mabel Grosse will be glad to change with her if she wants to get back to Chi for her sister's wedding. And you might tell Hemple, conductor on Number Six, that Gus Berger will meet him at Albuquerque next Saturday night to finish that game of pinochle."

In the weeks of her apprenticeship at Topeka Tessie was initiated into this strange new life where acquaintanceship seemed to have no geographical limits and gossip and intimacies were dropped along at the various stations by the ever moving dining crews. She

also learned the little schemes for making friends with the conductors so that one could be passed along the line when opportunity offered.

It was six weeks, however, before she heard of a girl in Albuquerque who was willing to change with her. Two months there; then on to Williams.

Thus, moving on, one station at a time, Tessie made her slow way across the continent. With every advance her horizon widened and her life in the Pork and Beanery receded farther and farther in perspective. It began to seem like a dream experience of another incarnation.

Then, suddenly Tessie was jolted back to the realities of her more recent adventures already somewhat blurred. The shock came during one of the weekly entertainments in the Santa Fé Reading Room provided by the railroad for the diversion of its isolated employees. A visiting quartet had just finished singing Negro spirituals when the lights went out and there flashed on the little screen at the back of the platform the title:

The Climax Film Co.
presents
Montaigne Belmont
in
PORK AND BEANS

Tessie gasped and thanked "Gawd" for the darkness. Then slowly the story unfolded and she saw

the very scenes she had worked in—the yacht, the ballroom, and the sequence in which she enacted her old job of dealing the beans in the P and B.

"Say, dearie, you must be in love with the leading man. What makes you so restless?" It was Ynez Maddox, her Williams roommate, who spoke. "And, say, that kid looks enough like you to be your sister."

"So she does—sumthin'," replied Tessie innocently. "But she's got a better complexion than I have."

Tessie prayed that the recognition would go no further; her prayer was answered, for not one of the girls spoke about it afterwards. Though the picture vividly reawakened the unhappy memories of her miserable experience with the Climax Film Company, it had the result of hastening her desire to get out to California as quickly as possible.

Two days later a motion picture company got off at Williams on its way to the Grand Cañon and Tessie learned from the assistant director that Ben McGowan was still with the Brilig Studio. Her restlessness now became an obsession, though it was nearly a month before she could make arrangements to move on to Needles. Six weeks here and she shifted with a girl at Barstow.

She was now in California, and as Barstow was the last transfer station all she had to do was to save up enough money to take her into Los Angeles.

Barstow—so near and yet so far! For it was at Barstow that Fate arranged a situation that for a while

threatened the whole course of Tessie's career. Bud Thurber was the innocent pawn. Bud was a fine, big, upstanding cow-puncher from the famous Henderson ranch, and the first time he met Tessie in the dining room, looking so daintily sweet in her simple black dress, with white starched collar and cuffs, he fell instantly in love with her. From that moment Bud began shamelessly to neglect his ranch duties so as to be with Tessie during all her off hours.

To Tessie, Bud was an entirely new kind of person. Unlike the denizens of her crowded metropolitan world, whose intimate contacts caused everybody to wear more or less false fronts as a matter of protective coloration, Bud was of the big, thinly populated West where men are notoriously bad or transparently good. And as Bud was transparently good his direct and simple goodness won Tessie's instant admiration.

During the first few weeks of his devotions Bud taught Tessie to ride horseback, starting with short trips into the hills and later on taking her on marvelous rides off into the desert and off over the high mesas. To a girl who had known nothing but the crowded pavements of lower Manhattan they were grand and glorious adventures.

Then, on a certain never-to-be-forgotten Sunday afternoon Bud took his little waitress friend on a journey into the mountains that was destined to have most fateful consequences for them both.

For two hours they rode the desert side by side,

almost in silence, for Bud was anything but garrulous, and was content to be just riding with his "little girl." And Tessie was grateful for the chance to wallow in the wonderful experience. The smell of sage was like a breath from Heaven, and the brilliancy of the sunshine seemed to penetrate her very soul. Even the heat felt friendly.

"How hot do you suppose it is, Bud?" she asked, as they zig-zagged their way through the junipers.

"Oh, about a hundred and five."

"A hundred and five?" she exclaimed with a little note of fright.

"There you go, you're just like all the tourists. They never feel the heat until they look at the thermometer. A hundred and five is nothin' in the desert. Back East they tell me horses drop dead when it's ninety-five, but out here they work all day in a hundred and ten. Forget that stuff, T'ress, this is a nice cool day."

Tessie's idea of mountains had also been gained vicariously—mostly from photographs, and her own recent long-distant observations. She thought of them as huge rocks rising abruptly from the plain—and so when they began to wind through the foothills on an ever-upward but almost imperceptible ascent, she was puzzled. "Heavens, Bud, when will we ever get to the top?" she asked.

"The top is always just over the hill ahead," he answered, and smiled.

Winding up through dark cool cañons, past great sweeps of wild lilac, they were soon in the manzanita, and then about five-thirty, they emerged high up on the east side of the mountain. It was the first big opening from which they could view the world beyond. Range upon range, the mountains piled up in all directions, receding in flat planes like a Japanese print.

"See those mountains to the north, T'ress? They're in Nevada, and that range to the east?—Well, it's in Arizona."

"Chee!"

There within view of three states they ate their supper—two sandwiches and a pickle, which each carried on his saddle bag. "Here's your dessert, T'ress," said Bud when they were through, and he passed her a handful of raisins he carried in his pocket. "On trips like this you should pack along only enough food to get by on," he added. "It's the tenderfoot who always loads up with the big eats." In half an hour they were back on the trail.

As they climbed higher the trail grew fainter, and in many rocky places Tessie wondered how the horses knew where they were going. But on they went, stopping every little while to rest, and then resuming their ascent without the slightest cue from the riders.

Like many elemental men Bud had a fine sense of dramatic values, and their long ride up through the mountains was merely in preparation for a sensational surprise he had in store for her—a sudden and stag-

gering view from the summit. As the trail grew steeper Tessie was sure their journey would end on the rocks just ahead but always there was one more rise.

Suddenly at a turn in the trail Bud called Tessie's attention to the view off to the right and as he held her interest in that direction the horses turned the corner and came to a stop. Bud smilingly watched Tessie's face as she slowly turned her head. "Pretty rotten! Eh, what?" he said and awaited her reply.

Tessie was speechless! She was looking off across a panorama such as one sees only in dreams. She gripped the saddle horn and gasped.

"That's the Mojave desert right below us," said Bud. "It was a hundred and thirty down there at noon—and no shade!"

"Chee!" was all Tessie could reply.

"And across there, sixty miles yonder, is 'Baldy,' the highest of the San Bernardinos. See the snow?"

"Chee!"

"And do you know what's beyond that?—right where the sun is going down? Orange groves and bathing beaches!"

"Chee!"

On the long ride up through the mountains, with her handsome cowboy cavalier leading the way, Tessie had begun to weaken in her resolutions. She had left New York for a definite goal—to reach Los Angeles and her friends the McGowans. But the wondrous lure of the desert and the unspoken but obvious love

of her picturesque suitor had begun to weave their spell about her. Jan? Yes, she had thought of Jan, but he was becoming more and more unreal to her—a hero of a childhood dream. She was grown up now. She had lived years in the last six months. Yes, she was ready for the Great Adventure. After all, Los Angeles might be no more friendly to her than Brooklyn was.

Then all at once she found herself on the top of the world looking off toward the Promised Land now lying in a purple haze with the glory of the setting sun proclaiming it. As she sat silently in her saddle she was seized by the same spirit that came to the Spanish Conquistadores, when, after their long pilgrimage across the burning desert, they topped the divide and looked down into the Garden of the Gods. Yes, hell lay below them but Heaven was just over the mountain beyond in the path of the setting sun. The call was stronger than even the romance of her present adventure.

Yes, she must move on.

XXI

CAPT. BRILIG was the first eastern impresario of the cinematic art to see the possibilities of Los Angeles as a motion picture center. Here indeed was every kind of background from rugged mountains to wind-swept seas, snow and sunshine, des-

erts and fertile fields, romantic villages and teeming cities—and all of these within a few hours of the studio.

And so the captain came out and leased some land in Edendale, close to the city, and thereon built the first studio in the far West. In a few years others followed, and by the time our little "fugitive" arrived, there were four or five companies working in and about Los Angeles.

The Brilig studio had grown from a mere open stage behind a board fence to a splendid plant, following the lines of Spanish architecture, and containing a glass stage, a menagerie, projection room, property department, and in fact, all the equipment of the modern studio except a laboratory. Films were still developed in the East.

Capt. Brilig, seeing ahead of most of his contemporaries the possibility of the screen becoming a powerful dramatic art, had induced one of the finest actors of the stage to work in his productions—which at this time were the standard of excellence in the motion picture world. It was to this thriving company that Ben McGowan had come, to take charge of publicity. His wife was given the responsibility of wardrobes, research and scenarios.

Instead of a mere desk in a ramshackle shed, like the one he occupied in the Brooklyn studio, McGowan now had a fine redwood paneled office with a mahogany desk and the services of a stenographer. There

was an air of solidity and security to his position utterly lacking in that impromptu plant back East.

"Bess," he said one day when his wife was going through some old magazines searching for a story, "I see the old Climax company has had a shaking up. It's been taken over by the Mutograph. Glatz stays with the new concern, but Driver is out, and is now making serials for the Acme."

"I wonder what's ever become of little Tessie Boggs," said Mrs. McGowan after a long pause.

"Oh, she's gone back to her pork and beans, no doubt," replied the publicity man. "In this game there are more called and fewer chosen than in any other under the sun."

"Poor little freckle-faced kid!" sighed the maternal Bess, "and she was so ambitious. Oh, well, it's only the baby dolls who can get along in the pictures. That child never could have the looks."

At that minute, the erstwhile Tessie Boggs was on her way to the Brilig Studio, quite as ambitious as ever.

XXII

BEN McGOWAN looked at the card with amusement. It was one of the sort you have printed while you wait at the doorway of a Penny Arcade—Miss Vivian Vane, Motion Picture actress—in "Old English" type that was not yet dry.

"Vivian Vane? Vivian Vane? Never heard of the

lady. What does she look like, Willie?" And Willie, fifteen and fresh as a cucumber, pantomimed his description of the visitor by chewing gum violently, tilting his head impishly, and then walking with a swagger peculiar to The Bowery.

"Well, if she's like that, show her in," said the publicity man with a grin, arising to meet the stranger.

In a moment he heard a giggle and suddenly in plunged a young lady who immediately threw her arms about the bald and abashed man and planted a kiss on each cheek.

"Tessie Bo . . .!" McGowan was stopped before he could finish.

"Sh-h-h-h!" she said, covering his mouth with her hand. "Vivian Vane, now an' f'rever! I'll explain later."

"Well, I'll be darned! How did you get out here and what are you going to do? Wait till I call Bess. Why bless your little heart, we were just talking about you. Hey, Bess, come here a minute," he called out of the window to his retreating spouse.

Mrs. McGowan was also subjected to a surprising and tempestuous hug as she entered the room, and as soon as she caught her breath, began to ask innumerable questions while "Vivian" tried to answer them all at once. In five minutes she had given her old "rocks of ages," as she called the McGowans, a sketchy and picturesque account of her hectic adventures at the Climax.

"And now I've come out to you, and you've got to get me a job on the lot."

"Well, I guess we can nose you in somewhere," assented the smiling Mac, wiping his spectacles.

"But remember I'm Vivian Vane of Albuquerque? Tessie Boggs? Why, I never hoid of the creature."

"All right, Vivian. It's hard to say that, but I'll get used to it—no one will ever know from us who you really are," and Mrs. McGowan patted the garishly overdressed little girl reassuringly. "We'll talk it all over this evening. Where's your trunk? You must stop with us till we get things settled," she added.

Talk is hardly the word to characterize the monologue Vivian enacted on the porch of the McGowan house that evening. All during dinner she gave them snatches of her story, but it was not until Mac had lighted his pipe, propped himself in his end of the big swinging seat, and Bess had made herself comfortable at the other end, that the stage was properly set for the big punches.

Vivian had six months' talk stored up inside of her; and ever since she came over the divide and knew that she was to meet her friends, she was nearly bursting to get it out. Sitting before them on a low cane stool, Vivian interrupted her gum chewing only long enough to giggle her pleasure at being there.

"All right, 'Vi'—no, I guess it'll have to be 'Vivian.' Now, tell us the whole tale from beginning to end.

Shoot." And Mac blew a long, comfortable cloud of smoke.

In the unfoldment of her tale, Vivian demonstrated that she was a consummate story-teller, for she held her hearers spell-bound for over an hour. Starting quietly at the beginning she gained fluency as she went on, and in a few minutes was standing up pantomiming her characters—and so inimitable were her characterizations that Ben and Bess were at times convulsed with laughter, and, at others, thrilled with the drama of it. Silhouetted against the silver haze of the moonlit valley with the distant myriad lights of Glendale and Pasadena for a backdrop, she presented a picture that a Robert Jones or Norman Bel-Geddes might have conceived.

Though Vivian told for the first time—greatly to the relief of her auditors—the charge against her in the Juvenile Court, and reviewed in detail the episode of the mandarin coat, she did not communicate her fear that Driver had sworn out a warrant for her arrest and that she was a "fugitive from justice."

"But, chee, these Western studios are so different," she concluded. "I could tell as soon as I entered the Brilig gate that the place was decent."

"Decency has nothing to do with geography, Vivian," corrected McGowan. "The Mutoscope in New York is a corking studio, while we have one right here in Edendale which is now being investigated by the police. No, the character of every studio is a reflection of the

bosses at the top, and a few of them are pretty rough, both in the East and in the West."

"Well, anyway, I like the West," insisted the young traveler. "An' I like the men out here."

"Did they all make love to you, Vivian?" asked Mac with a smile.

"Those that did really meant it, an' that's what I liked," said Vivian. "There aint many goils in those desert towns y'see."

"Well, Bess, mix us up some orange cocktails, and then the hay," McGowan replied, with an eloquent stretch. "I've got to immortalize our stars for the trade weeklies in the morning."

Bess's disrobing, however, was merely a subterfuge, for as soon as her spouse was comfortably disposed in bed, she put on a wrapper and sought out her house guest on the screen porch where she was supposed to be sleeping. Vivian had told of a certain situation between Kitty and the beautiful Montaigne Belmont, and though she told it frankly, there were certain details that piqued Bess's curiosity, and so she sneaked out and sat on the end of the young lady's bed.

For some reason or other, women's confidences loosen up with greater abandon when they are in dishabille late at night than at any other time, and so the college woman, wise in academic knowledge, sat for an hour at the feet of the young girl of the tenements who knew more about the world, the flesh and the devil than is taught in any of our seats of learning.

"But wasn't it a great temptation to accept Driver's offer when you could have had all those wonderful clothes and a chance to star?" asked Bess with repressed emotion, after hearing the exciting details.

"Well, I'd like pretty clothes as well as any of 'em, but it was the chance to really act and get somewhere that almost made me weaken," she replied. "One day after Driver had been pawin' me over, Mrs. Wilkins, the old character lady passed by and said, 'Don't give up, dearie, God'll be better to you than that devil!' She's awful religious you know."

"Hey, Bess, for the love of Mike, come to bed," came a voice from inside the house.

"Good night, dearie; sleep tight!" said Bess, and leaning over gave Vivian a kiss. Smiling happily, Vivian festooned her gum to the hanging light bulb over her head and closed her eyes.

In Bess' room a slight sound as of the tearing of carpets punctuated the stillness of the room. Ben was snoring, but it was a long, long, time before the anodyne of sleep blurred out the effect of those intimate excitements Vivian had stirred in Bess.

XXIII

BUT can she *act*, Mac?" asked Capt. Brilig in his office the next morning. "She's not much to look at, and you know beauty goes a long way in this game. And as for her nerve, we've got no end

of these dare-devil cowgirls around here who'll jump over Yosemite Falls for a ten dollar ticket; but they've got faces like ladders, and none of 'em can act. I used to believe that we didn't need actors in this business—that a good director could make a wooden Indian do anything that was necessary, but Stanley Barryworth and Gene Wilkinson have changed my point of view. They are trained actors—and look at the stuff they're doing! No, the time has come when screen people have got to know how to act."

"I think the kid has it in her, Capt'n, if she ever gets a chance to develop," and McGowan puffed away quietly on his pipe.

"Well, let her work extra a while, and if she's what you say, perhaps we can put her in stock later on."

Needless to say, Vivian was delighted. Any old job would have suited her. "Why, I'd a worked in the wardrobe or fed the animals jest to stay on this lot!" she exploded.

But if Vivian was satisfied, Mac was not. He had developed a tender devotion to the battered little derelict from the slums of New York and he wished her to get along. Besides, he had a tremendous belief in her latent ability.

"Al," he said to the camera man, "Frank Dodd has offered to direct Miss Vane in a short tryout before the camera, but I wish you would make a few camera tests first, so that we'll know what grease paint to use, and how to light her for her scenes."

"You're wise there, Mac," responded the camera man. "You never can tell by looking at a girl how she's going to screen. You can round up four blondes who look exactly alike, and one of 'em will screen like a Senegambian. It depends upon the actinic quality of the skin. I'll tell you what to do," he went on. "Have Mrs. Hernando make her up. She's a bear at it, and too old at the game to be jealous—and we'll shoot some stuff at noon."

It was the first time Vivian had ever been made up with care. At the Climax the extras had all been dabbed much alike, when they wore make-up at all; but Mrs. Hernando was interestedly thorough, for who does not wish to please the publicity man?

"You leave her to me, Mac, and she'll photograph like Gloria Gladsome. What the gods have missed, the grease paint will rectify. Now, dearie, first of all let me do your hair. That's an awful mop you're wearin'! We'll do it up into a nice, loose, girlish knot on the back of your neck." And when the good dame had finished her work she had accomplished a charmingly marvelous result. "It is prettier," assented Vivian; "it gives m' head a classy slant, don't it?"

But it was not until Mrs. Hernando had for twenty minutes massaged the girl's face with cold cream and applied a number three paint, and after carefully rubbing it in, powdered her with number two, that Vivian's rough and mottled skin gave way to a complexion like a peach. "We'll play it easy with the lipstick, dearie.

That stuff's all right on the stage, but in the pictures it's too strong. All these girls, Gloria Gladsome included, use it wrong. Besides, now that you're made up, I can see you've got a fine mouth and your teeth are just beautiful, and that's worth as much as a dimple in this business. Look, Mac, don't you think she looks pretty well?" and Mrs. Hernando cocked her head, fussed a bit with Vivian's hair, and looked upon her handiwork with satisfaction.

"If she only screens as well, I'll be satisfied," replied the beaming McGowan.

"All right, then, I'm off," said the character woman with a smile. "I'm working with Mr. Dodd in that Monte Cristo picture, and he'll be wanting me in a minute."

Fortunately, Al Korloff was not shooting this day, and so the three interested experimenters went immediately to the big open stage, where a few feet were shot in close-ups, showing various angles of Vivian's face. "I think she's going to be a left-sider," said the camera man, squinting through the finder. Then they went to the closed stage, where the operation was continued under the new Cooper-Hewitt lights.

"Chee, we're like a lot of green coipses. I hope I'm not goin' to look like this on the screen!" exploded Vivian, who was experiencing this ghastly illumination for the first time.

"Don't worry, little one, we may have to change

your grease number, but that's all," responded the camera man.

Unlike the old Climax lot, which more nearly resembled the yard of an industrial plant, the Mission wall of the Brilig Studio enclosed ten acres of wooded barranca and charming hillsides, so that many of the exterior shots could be made right on the grounds. And so finally, after choosing a romantic spot, the camera was set up once more in the open sunlight. Then, after taking the usual shots, Korloff ran off to the scenic loft, returning with a canvas "flat" the size of a door which had been silvered on one side. "Here's where I try an experiment I've been figuring for a long time," he said. "I did a back-lighting stunt on a blonde a while ago, and the hair was swell, but the face too dark. I think I've got the answer now." Placing Vivian against the sun and using the silver reflector beside the camera, he got the radiant effect of a stained-glass window. The sun sifting through the loose edges of the girl's blond hair seemed to envelop her in a glory, while the reflector beside the camera corrected the dark opacity of the silhouetted figure. "That's it," cried Korloff in delight, "wait till the boss sees this."

In those days the laboratories were all situated in the East, and it was two weeks after shooting that directors were privileged to see on the screen what they had made. But Al Korloff had ingeniously fixed up a small plant where, for experimental purposes, he could de-

velop short pieces of film, and it was into the dark mysteries of this moist and smelly cavern that Vivian's film went that very evening, with Mac an alert spectator.

"Why are you so interested in this test, Mac?" asked the camera man, as he wound the celluloid ribbon on the hand-cranked drum. "Is the kid anything to you?" He gave McGowan a knowing look.

"Well, yes, in a way, she's a kind of niece by adoption," replied McGowan chivalrously, "and I'd like all the boys on the lot to give her a hand occasionally."

"I'm sorry, Mac; I didn't really mean that," explained Korloff apologetically.

"Oh, that's all right, Al. But you tip the boys off, won't you?"

Just then Korloff looked scrutinizingly through the film against the red light.

"It's great stuff, all right Mac, but I think we can use a little darker powder in the open air stuff."

The next day Dodd's company went off on location to a ranch north of Santa Barbara, Vivian being drafted along with eleven other extras; and as they were to be gone for three days, the studio tests had to be postponed. But the adventure was diverting and pleasing to the little Bowery girl, who had grown to love the big outdoors.

"Oh, it was jest like a grand, big picnic," she reported to McGowan afterwards. "Mr. Dodd's a dear and as thoughtful of the extras as of the principals.

We all ate together like one big family, an' when I barked my shin doin' a fall in the cañon, he was as anxious over my hurt as though I'd been his daughter. He's certainly a different fella from that awful Driver. But, chee, why do I ever think of the creature? That whole deal's dead to me now, but somehow I can't help comparin' it to this where everybody's so nice. Why, even Mr. Barryworth talked to me—to ME, mind you, a mere extra. He was tellin' me I ought'a read more. He was readin' all the time."

"Well, I'm glad you're happy, Vivian, but to more serious work. Frank Dodd is fearfully busy, but he says he'll put you through some dramatic tests to-day at noon, if we have anything ready to shoot; so I want you to get into your make-up at once—only use a number-two and a half powder, instead of the two."

Working off her ill-repressed excitement by chewing gum, Vivian appeared at the appointed hour in all her greased splendor.

"All right, Miss Vane—Are you ready, Al?" spoke up the director as he sat in a canvas chair and ate a sandwich. "Now, Miss Vane, Lady Claire has been out driving in the park, and has just entered this drawing-room. As she is taking off her wraps the telephone rings. She goes to it and a voice tells her that Sir Guy, her sweetheart, has been seen leaving town with her rival. She registers surprise, chagrin and indignation. Then turning to the desk she writes Sir Guy a note

that will burn him up. Now, let's see you go through the action."

Vivian started. "Better park your gum, Miss Vane, hadn't you?" asked the director with a smile. Again she started, more nervous than before. Entering the room she walked forward with a Bowery swagger that Lady Claire would have had difficulty in imitating. It was Vivian's definition of gentility. At the telephone she did better, but when she came to "handing Sir Guy his" in a letter, her violence lacked the repression one would expect to find in a cultured lady.

"All right, Miss Vane," commented the director, with concealed amusement. "Now suppose you are a young girl from a boarding school and have been punished for something. Your father enters; you plead with him to let you go to the party; he relents and you register delight.—Ready, Al?"

Here again Vivian was called upon to impersonate a character she knew only through her limited reading of magazines, and her interpretation of the young school girl was so boisterous as to cause Dodd to chuckle audibly. Fortunately, the aspirant for the drama did not hear it.

When it came, however, to typing a rough girl of the slums the director sat up with his eyes sparkling, and actually clapped. "That was splendid, Miss Vane. You would do well in such stuff; but unfortunately they are character parts, and we don't use them often.

I'm afraid, however, you're not equipped yet to do ingénues."

It was frank and kindly, but the verdict was like a slap in the face to Vivian. "Wasn't I all right in that Lady Claire part?" she asked McGowan wistfully, when the director had gone.

"Well, Vivian, it's true, you lack understanding of certain classes of society, but after all, little girl, they *can* be learned. But there are a few more tests I want to put you through, alone—some close-ups. Al, shall we make 'em in here?"

"Yes, but I want to shoot one of 'em with that back light," answered the camera man.

Seated on a stool with a neutral background, the camera was brought up to within four feet of Vivian's face, while Mac crouched on his knees in front of her.

"Now, Vivian," he said, "forget all about the camera and try to think of what I tell you." And with his hand on the calf of the camera man's leg, to give him the signal, McGowan began:

"Vivian, suppose you were called to Mr. Dodd's office and he began to tell you that you could never succeed on the screen. I believe that's what he really thinks, and I'm afraid I agree with him."—A slight pressure and the camera began its monotonous click,—as a look of unutterable sadness and disappointment came into Vivian's face. "The fact is, Vivian, you lack beauty, and beauty is everything on the screen. It's too bad, but even if you can't be an actress, we'll

keep you here on the lot in some capacity. I'm sorry, but it looks pretty hopeless." By now the tears were falling, and beneath her paint Vivian had turned a deathly pale. Her best hope—the man she believed in most—thought her unequal to her great ambition!

"But there is one chance, Vivian," he went on, "the camera is a queer instrument and some of the rarest beauties don't photograph for a cent, while others, whose lack of beauty is superficial, photograph like Sistine Madonnas; and I have every reason to believe that you are one of that sort. Yes, your photographic tests showed that. A new light came into Vivian's face, a look of hope; her eyes opened and the lips parted. "In fact, Al and I both agree that in several of the tests you are downright pretty. Mr. Dodd hasn't seen them, but mark my words when he does, he'll change his mind. You're going to land in this game, or my name isn't Mac."

When Al ran out on his footage Vivian was in the midst of a radiant and happy smile. The twirling of the camera crank brought her to her senses.

"This is all a trick, Mac, to make me laugh and cry. 'T isn't fair to frighten me, an' then lead me on with fake hope. I know exactly what Mr. Dodd thinks. He said it pretty plainly," and her face again relapsed into gloom.

"Well, anyway, Vivian, he wont commit himself finally until he sees you on the screen. And so, while

we're at it, I'd like to get a close-up of your face showing a few definite emotions."

"All right, Mac, I'll do enthin' you say, but somehow I feel sure it's coitans for your little Vivian—and I did so dream of bein' an actress."

"Now, Vivian, I want you to show anger, and I'll leave it to your fertile imagination to think of something that will prompt the look."

When Vivian focused her mind upon a thing there was likely to be nothing muddy or indefinite in the process; and so after a full half minute of intense concentration she began to breathe quickly, her lips parted and the sinister look she shot from those deep blue eyes was purposeful and dangerous.

Also the request for a lovelorn look of a lass who was listening to her lover's confession—this also was quite satisfactory.

"Vivian, I do believe you were thinking of Jan. His is the only name that ever seemed to stir you."

"Mac, you're a clairvoyant, that's exactly who I *was* thinkin' of. It's silly, of course, but then I'm a silly girl."

There were two days to wait before Vivian would know the results of her tests, and in the meantime she was restless as a hop-toad, torn between the thought that Dodd was disappointed in her and the hope that she might screen better than she appeared in action.

"We'll know this noon," McGowan told her Thursday morning just as she was going on to work in a big

mob scene. "But don't take the results too seriously, Vivian. You are young yet, and you'll be able to work here someway."

When the noon hour was announced by the blowing of a whistle, Vivian, nervously snooping around, saw Capt. Brilig, Dodd, and her 'dear old Mac' disappear into the projection room; and taking up her position behind the half-closed door of the camera vault, she waited for them to come out. For nearly an hour she stood there not daring to leave for her lunch. Finally the door opened and she peeked through the crack with the anxiety of a prisoner about to learn her fate on the faces of the returning jury.

The first to emerge was Capt. Brilig, nervous and excited; then came Dodd, impassive and thoughtful, and last of all McGowan, who, instead of beaming happily, looked as solemn as an owl. Vivian turned cold, and then as she grasped the significance of their attitudes, there fell another blow. She caught just this much of a remark by Capt. Brilig: "the jurisdiction of the court is—" Vivian bit her lip, and returned without any lunch to the set where she had been called for one o'clock.

If Vivian had been more analytical she might have wondered why the three most important men in the famous Brilig studio would go without their lunches to devote an hour and a half considering the case of a mere extra; but Vivian was in no state of mind to reason at all. She thought the delay was caused by

Mac's putting up a hard and determined fight in the face of hopeless opposition.

The truth was, however, that a very momentous event was transpiring in the fortunes of the Brilig company that morning. The dramatic tests made by Dodd had been shown on the screen with a mixture of amusement and gentle sympathy, but when the close-ups of Vivian's face, showing her running through the various emotions of disappointment, tears, renewed hope and happiness, came into view, there was a sudden movement on the part of the three men.

"Gad, Captain, look at that expression!" exclaimed the director. "Why she's more beautiful than Gloria Gladstone. Well, this *is* a surprise! You never can tell in this business how they are going to screen—say!"

"Mac, she photographs like a million dollars," nervously added the head of the Brilig studios. "Let's have this stuff all over again."

So for an hour, while the pictures were run over and over again, the three men sat discussing the possibilities of their unusual find.

"Now, Mac, we've got to play this very carefully," explained Capt. Brilig, when the lights were turned on and the projector dismissed. "This girl will be a gold mine if we handle her right. First of all, we mustn't make the success of the tests too strong with her. She's likely to lose her head and spoil the whole thing. Furthermore, if anybody else knew what we know,

she'd be stolen away. Sign her up with a two year's contract, and then we'll put her into immediate training. She's got to be looked after by beauty specialists, and Frank will have to train her in dramatics. We'll let her fool around in bits, and after a while small parts, till she learns the game; but above all don't shoot any close-ups of her. Then in about a year we'll be ready to spring a surprise on the movie world. I tell you, boys, beauty like that is as rare as it's surprising. Why, that crying picture would make the madonnas of the Old Masters look like plugged nickels. Now, Mac, tell us all about her—where she came from; the whole story. We don't want to spend a fortune in making a hand-picked star and then find we've bought a lot of trouble."

So it was that the director and the proprietor were permitted to know the whole story of Tessie Boggs.

"Then she hasn't any husband or lover that's likely to come out here and horn in?" asked Capt. Brilig.

"No," replied McGowan. "The only sweetie she ever had was a young fighter in New York and fortunately he never even knew that he was loved. It was just a one-sided kid romance. No, the only person who might spill the beans is Driver."

"I'm not worrying about him," put in Dodd. "If we change her identity, I'll guarantee that in a year's time her own mother won't be able to recognize her on the screen. Even these pictures would fool him. This

is one of those cases where photography lies—'high, wide and handsome.' "

The incident of the Juvenile Court was next discussed, and they had reached a complete understanding of possible consequences as they left the projection room and went over to Capt. Brilig's office where a decisive plan and program was finally adopted. "I'll leave it to you to fix it up with the girl, Mac. You know we're taking an awful risk to spend a lot of money on a youngster like that and then chance her slipping it over on us. For remember, we can't sign a contract with a minor—without parents or legal guardians."

"Don't you worry, Capt'n," answered McGowan confidentially, "that young lady will shoot straight."

XXIV

IF this had been a scenario rather than a story, the "continuity" at this point would read somewhat as follows:

TITLE: FIVE YEARS LATER

Scene 262 Fade in on Vivian Vane, now a famous star, in her salon of rich and ornate splendor. Beautifully gowned, she is reclining on a chaise longue, and we judge by her grace and ease that she has become a young lady of position and poise.

Such is the ease with which the cinema annihilates time—and saves footage!

But cutting from the rough, slangy little girl of those momentous camera tests to the Vivian Vane of Scene 262, five years later, requires some explanation. Therefore, though our plot goes into partial eclipse during these five hectic years, we shall glance at a few of the milestones in Vivian's pilgrimage to her place in the sun where she becomes a nation's symbol of American Girlhood in its finest flowering.

It will be recalled that Vivian Vane watched three excited and serious men emerge from the projection room of the Brilig plant and then disappear into the office of Capt. Brilig, where they remained for over an hour, leaving the poor frightened youngster wondering what had happened to her fate. Their preoccupation, quite misunderstood by her, was that of a group of alchemists who had been witnessing the transmutation of brass into gold.

"How do you account for a thing like this, Frank?" asked Captain Brilig of his director. "I thought Susie Shannon was one of the prettiest girls I ever saw, and she photographed like a fright; yet here is a little girl with a most unprepossessing face, photographing like a million dollars."

"It's the difference between screen and optical beauty, Capt'n," answered Dodd. Susie's beauty was effective but superficial. Her features were soft, and it was chiefly her complexion that ravished your eyes.

With most people a youthful coloring always wins over regularity of features. But you can't fool the old camera. It seeks out essentials; and behind Miss Vane's poor skin it discovered her beautiful, well-chiseled features. Did you notice the shape of her nose? Classic! And the curve of her cheek?—and her mouth? Why, her smile is worth half of that million you estimate her at. Fortunately, complexion is the least essential factor in screen beauty; grease paint will take care of that; but there is no artifice of make-up that can rectify soft or irregular features."

"No, you never can tell until you give them full tests," Dodd went on. "Personally, I was afraid of her hair. Jennie Peterson's hair looked exactly like Vivian's, but it came out flat as a pancake on the screen. Miss Vane's evidently is warmer in the shadows, which gives it some form—lucky kid."

"Lucky us, too," added the Captain. "We've got a gold mine here if we develop it properly. First of all——"

For one whole afternoon the three heads of the Brilig studio discussed plans of training and exploitation. While beauty-contests were being conducted by studios and newspapers all over the country, in the desperate search for potential film-queens, the miracle of discovery happened right on the Brilig lot. And when a producer finds a face that "photographs like a million dollars," there is nothing he wont do to prepare its owner for the screen.

McGowan's position was difficult, for it was a great temptation to tell Vivian everything, feeling, as he did, that she would 'shoot straight' in any event. However, he deferred to Capt. Brilig's wishes and let his charge know only enough to stimulate her interest.

"Yes, Vivian," he told her that night as they sat on the porch watching a train creeping slowly up the valley, "the Captain was very pleased with your tests. He thinks with good training you will do very well, very well indeed, and with hard work you may *some* day become a star. But it means work, study and everlastingly taking care of yourself, Vivian—especially your health."

"Say, Mac, is this all on the square?" asked the young girl suspiciously. "Does it mean that I'll have to go yachting with Captain Brilig? If it does, I'll jump the whole game. You know Jan would still get me a job back in New York if I ast for it."

"No, Vivian, Captain Brilig wants nothing from you but pictures. He's no philanthropist, of course, and in spending money on your development and training he's expecting to get his return when you make good. He's the one who is really frightened, for if you turn him down after his spending a fortune, you'd be doing only what others have done time and again."

"I'm sorry, Mac, I said what I did, but it sounded like Driver. You tell Captain Brilig for me that if he plays fair, I hope he makes a fortune offa me,—which at present seems like an awful joke."

XXV

THUS it came about that Vivian Vane was put through an intensive training in mind, body and spirit that would have startled our leading pedagogues. Her body being the first consideration, she was given definite exercise, horseback riding, tennis and golf, which, of course, necessarily included getting used to wearing the proper habiliments without self-consciousness.

Her most profitable—and amusing—exercise however was gained at the dancing academy where she learned to walk with Italian grace by carrying a bucket of water on her head, and then was given an hour a day in classic dancing and posturing.

At the beauty parlors, where Vivian was going daily to learn cosmetics, the care of the skin and hairdressing, she learned still more of how "high society" values its pulchritude. Here she met matrons and dowagers who were invoking all the arts of make-believe to counteract their dietary appetites.

It was in Vivian's studio work, however, that she received a cultural training to make some of the "fashionable finishing schools for young ladies" seem, by comparison, about as efficient as correspondence courses in seal training. There was a great temptation to use her in pictures requiring physical courage, but Capt. Brilig had given strict orders not to jeopardize her in scenes of possible injury. There was too much

money at stake to take chances on permanent disfigurement. So she was cast only in society or comedy-drama. Nor could Vivian have had a better instructor than Frank Dodd, who, though recruited from the stage, was a well-informed man of the world who had traveled extensively and owned a well thumbed library.

"Now, Miss Vane, let me see you enter the drawing-room like an aristocrat. No, do not hold your head so high. Well bred people don't sniff at their servants. Now sit down, extend your feet. There—see how gracefully your gown reveals the lines of your figure." And he stood before her and, with a sweeping gesture, illustrated the curves of composition. "Bending the knees shortens the figure. No artist paints a portrait with the lines broken at right angles."

No less notable was Vivian's academic training. Under the able tutelage of Miss Irene Henry, who became her almost constant companion, her grammar soon lost its roughest edges and she began to develop an appetite for a kind of literature not to be found in the fan magazines or the Sunday supplement. Even that strange Bowery pronunciation of the letter r began to lose something of its oily resonance, for fortunately Vivian was amazingly sensitive to her environment and strikingly alert in her attentiveness to instruction.

Furthermore she developed the crusading enthusiasm of all converts, and was only too glad to pass along her newly acquired erudition to her less fortunate sisters.

"Say, Hettie," she said one day when that young lady was bewailing the fact that 'only a pull got any one enthin' in the pitchers,' "you ought to try and speak better English. That word 'aint' you use sounds terrible."

"Aw, rats," retorted Hettie with great contempt, "my talk aint goin' to show on the screen is it?"

"No, Hettie, of course it don't show on the screen, but suppose some day you got to be a star, and had to make a speech in public."

"I wouldn't make no speeches."

"Well, then suppose you were interviewed for a newspaper, or a magazine, and the reporter quoted you exactly—it wouldn't sound very good, would it? Besides, it's so much nicer to talk aristocratic than rough. You don't know how bad that woid 'aint' sounds to people who don't use it."

But there was one price for being a lady that seemed almost too high to pay—that was giving up gum.

"Can you imagine Mary, Queen of England, sitting on her throne chewing, chewing, chewing?" asked Bess McGowan when she got to the point where she felt it safe to broach the subject. "Imagine Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt at a White House reception working her face up and down and stretching out long strings of gum which she eats back into her mouth. No, Vivian; it lacks repose, and is utterly fatal to beauty. No woman can be beautiful with her face in perpetual motion."

"Chee, I never thought o' that," replied Vivian, removing the wad she had been vainly trying to hide. "But I'll bet Queen Mary chews when the loid-of-the-bed-chamber—a—isn't around."

"And Vivian, my *dear,* you *must* try not to punctuate everything with 'chee.' It was all right for Tessie, but it doesn't at all fit Vivian."

"Chee.—Oh, excuse me, Bess, but I don't know if I'll ever make the grade. There's so much I shouldn't do. And I just love gum."

It was but natural that this pet of Capt. Brilig's should have received much attention on the lot—jealousy on the part of the women, and growing admiration on the part of the men. But Vivian was true to the promise given to Capt. Brilig and Mac. She held aloof from all entanglements. She had seen no one yet who could take the place of the fairy prince who had defended her against the dragon Dorgan, and his picture still looked at her out over the top of innumerable silver toilet articles de toilette that now garnished her dressing table.

One afternoon in the late fall she returned to the studio, pretty as a picture in white riding breeks, but very, very tired. She had been out in Griffith park on location.

"Vivian," said McGowan, holding a folded newspaper in his hand. "I have news for you. Jan Morsowski has left New York and gone to Poland. Here

it is. It says he has gone to fight for the independence of his father's country."

Vivian listened in silence. When she took the paper from Mac, her hand trembled. With her face calm but unmistakably white, she read the item word by word. Then folding the paper, she walked slowly to her dressing room.

"Gad, I didn't think it was as bad as that," mused McGowan as he watched her crossing the lot.

XXVI

AFTER months of doing nothing but "bits," with just occasionally the smallest kind of a part, Vivian was puzzled. She was beginning to wonder why Capt. Brilig was spending so much money on her training, yet holding her back on the screen. "Mac," she complained, "it seems to me if I am ever to become even a juvenile lead, I ought to have more chance than I get here."

"Have patience, Vivian; you'll have a chance, yet," replied the Brilig "bell-ringer," and he would have given his hat could he have told her the dénouement that was about to be enacted.

Brilig, McGowan and Dodd, 'the three godfathers' to our little nebulous star, had done well in their astiferous plans. Vivian had received no definite promises that might have made her hard to handle. Her training had been accomplished without once re-

vealing her to the fans. Whenever her face loomed too importantly on the film, the scene was cut to a mere flash, and a great air of mystery had been created on the lot regarding her personality.

Vivian, too, had faithfully kept her end of the bargain. She had worked hard, observed the technic of the stars, been "good" to the point of giving up her Rosemint gum (except when no one was looking) and had avoided all questions regarding her identity.

"Naturally you won't tell them the truth," Mac had told her, "but don't let that fermenting little mind of yours frame up an imaginative past. For if we ever have occasion to exploit you, I haven't decided whether you were born in the Sahara desert in the midst of a sand storm, were washed ashore in a shipwreck, or were ravished from the ancestral home of the Duke of Wyandotte. In any event, it will be a story worthy of your place on the Silver Screen."

Just a year from the day she had signed her unique contract, Vivian was called into the office of Capt. Brilig, with Ben McGowan and Frank Dodd already in attendance. The men all looked serious, and the youngster was frightened.

"Vivian, sit there where I can see you," said the famous producer, and the girl timidly sank into a great armchair, looking like a mere child in the immensity of the leather upholstery. She leaned forward with her big blue questioning eyes, and an interrogating lift to her brows.

"Vivian, you are about to become a star."

"Why Captain Brilig, what—what—I—I."

"You are to make your initial screen appearance in The June Moon. Barryworth is to support you."

"Stanley Barryworth to *support* me?" she interrupted.

"Yes, and the whole resources of the studio are to be put behind your first picture in order to assure its success. Do you think you'll be equal to it?"

"Well, I'll do my darndest, I'll—I'll—But Captain Brilig, I'm not known. The fans won't know me from Adam—or Eve, I mean. Why, I've never been in a single close-up."

"That was part of the scheme, Vivian," interrupted McGowan. "We wanted you to get your screen training with as little notice as possible. You'll understand when you read this," and the publicity man handed the girl a dummy proof of an article containing news that to say the least was startling. It read:

VIVIAN VANE

The Newest Star in the Brilig Firmament

NEW YORK'S HIGHEST SOCIETY CONTRIBUTES HER MOST BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER TO THE SCREEN

The Brilig Company has just made the startling announcement of the discovery of a new star

who will shortly be seen in The June Moon. Vivian Vane is the young lady's name, and it is rumored she is the daughter of one of Baltimore's oldest and most aristocratic families. Highly educated in a New York finishing school, it is said Miss Vane brings to the screen a new type of personality. How she was induced to give up a life of cultural ease for the strenuous work of the films is not disclosed, but it is reported that special inducement had to be made in regard to her care and that her contract calls for a salary unique in this highly paid profession. Those who have pre-viewed The June Moon predict for Miss Vane an immediate and stupendous success.

"And now, Vivian," Mac went on, "you'll have to leave us and live with your 'mother' in Hollywood, in ingénuish respectability."

"Chee!" was all the girl could say. Mac regarded the lapse as justifiable under the circumstances. Vivian's heart was beating like a trip hammer, and her mind was working like yeast among the raisins.

"But how about my studies?"

Vivian's sponsors had often commented with delight upon her enthusiastic hunger for learning; and now, just at the realization of her great ambition, she still thought of her "studies"! McGowan and Brilig exchanged glances.

"That's all fixed, Vivian. You're to have Miss

Henry the same as before," answered Capt. Brilig. "I hoped you would want to go on."

"But—'Mother'—where am *I* to get a mother? I'm afraid I wouldn't know how to act with a mother. I just barely remember mine. And Mac—it may sound funny—but you're more my mother than anybody else."

"Oh, I've got a peach of a mother for you, Vivian," spoke up McGowan with unctuous cheeriness. "She's a dear mousy little woman who has just come to the Coast and hasn't a relation in the world. You'll love her to death. And even if you don't, 'domestic happiness' pictures taken with her will make you loved by the great American fan. The average person believes that any young girl who has a mother must of necessity be pure and sweet. We've simply got to have a mother for you."

But though Vivian was looking into the faces of the three men, she heard not a single word of what McGowan was saying. Instead she was wondering why they had been so good to her. From her slight but real contact with life, it did not seem the part that men usually played.

Mac spun on with the sensational plan, but at that moment Vivian's whole heart and mind were occupied with but one emotion. She loved her godfathers. And when Vivian loved, her expression of it was spontaneously elemental. She wished to kiss the object of her love.

"You old dears!" she cried, interrupting the narrative, and suddenly jumping from her chair before they were aware of what was happening, she threw her arms about each in turn and kissed the startled men. Then came the tears.

"My, I hope I won't disappoint you," she sighed; and Mac, patting her on the shoulders, led her from the office.

"You made a wonderful guess, Captain, when you put your doubloons on Vivian," said Frank Dodd, blowing his nose to cover his embarrassment.

"Guess, nothing," snorted Capt. Brilig, glad of a chance to hide his emotion in overacted indignation. "I can tell a thoroughbred as far as I can see one."

XXVII

HIGH society had on several other occasions given its untrained daughters to the uplift of the cinema (usually because the father had financial connection with the producing companies), but somehow they had failed to hold their dizzy positions in the heavens, and in most cases descended like inglorious sticks after the first picture. But Capt. Brilig had taken no such chances with his "find." She was fully prepared, and besides, didn't she "photograph like a million dollars?"

"The June Moon" was an instant success, and within a few months, Vivian Vane was the talk of Filmdom,

her life's story and its pictorial garnishments being particularly intriguing to the astoundingly growing number of readers of the fan magazines.

The new star was now ensconced in a charming bungalow in Hollywood. It was one of those low-browed architectural triumphs which, while attempting to suggest cozy comfort, outraged every climatic condition of Southern California. The immense, almost flat roof, presenting its huge dimensions to the sun, made it a bake oven in summer, and the five foot extending eaves cut such deep shadows on the walls that it was an ice box in winter. Some travelers from India, where the heat is humid, had introduced the fad into Los Angeles, and the herd-minded villagers, never once inquiring why the early Spaniards had built as they did, seeking all the sunlight possible, had permitted the style to become epidemic.

Bungalows being the thing at that time, Vivian had one. Furthermore, it had a huge palm, stuck like a feather duster in the front lawn, that made the house appear even more squat than the architect had dared to hope. The palm looked well in still pictures, destined for eastern publication where the palm is a symbol of exotic ease. Delightfully unaware of these incongruities, Vivian was happy in her new home, and under the refining association of "Mother" and Miss Henry, she began to feel that she was achieving the "nice" things of life her hungry little heart had craved so long. "Just think, Mac," she would say, "I've got a

little house—a home, I mean—all my own: it makes me feel like a queen."

One thing, however, Capt. Brilig had started that he was finding hard to finish; Vivian had developed such an appetite for academic instruction that she determined to enter High School and take the full course. As Miss Henry was a certificated teacher it was finally arranged with the Board of Education to put her on the pay roll—with the understanding that the studio should really pay her salary—and then let Vivian have her entire services.

When the schedule was finally arranged, McGowan released a story telling how Vivian's family consented to her screen appearance only if it did not interfere with her school work, and the picture of her standing on the steps with her class—she was admitted to the tenth grade—reposed on the dresser of half the high-school girls in the country, stirring in their hearts dreams of a similar experience.

"Mac," she said one day, when her perspiring friend had brought over some new publicity to O.K. "I sometimes wonder if it is all true and will I wake up and find that I am—some one else? Vivian Vane! It seems so strange. And yet I *am* Vivian Vane. My screen character has become realer to me than my own. I think as Vivian would think, and I do what I think Vivian would do. I feel this more strongly when I am studying my parts. "Sweet girl parts" you call them. Well, I always wanted to be nice and have pretty

things. I never did like vulgarity even when I was—even before I became Vivian." And the transmuted slum child sank back among the cushions on the great divan and looked out of the window toward the mountains that so effectually shut her away from another world that every day was receding into vague memory,—a memory of another life she had lived a long, long time ago, perhaps in a previous incarnation.

Suddenly she shuddered. Opening her eyes as though startled by an apparition, she sat up and caught hold of McGowan's sleeve.

"Do you think I'll ever be recognized, Mac? Every time I see a juvenile officer around the lot, I have a ghastly feeling of faintness—even the words 'juvenile lead' used to give me a chill."

"Of course you wont, Vivian. Your own—even Kitty wouldn't know you now. If it came to a showdown, we'd all stand pat, and it would be up to them to prove your identity. No, it's out of the question. Besides, who would be interested?"

"Driver," she gasped.

"Oh, forget Driver, Vivian. He's through. He's making serials now, and you know what that means."

Nevertheless Driver still persisted in the back of her head as a dread possibility who might loom up and blow over her house of cards.

Then her face suddenly brightened. "What if Jan could see me now? I wonder if he'll ever come back to this country?"

XXVIII

THE history of the world is written in its art. The little we know of old Pithecanthropus Erectus and his hairy progeny has been learned from their tastes in stone hatchets, and the stories of their snappy lives as recorded on elephants' tusks and the walls of caves. The temples of the Egyptians, the sculpture of the Greeks, the paintings of the Renaissance, have given us our profoundest understanding of the people of those periods. The historian of the future who wishes to learn the intimate truths of twentieth century civilization will turn to motion pictures. (How much more humanly interesting than any written or painted account, would be a cinematic street-scene in Athens, a hundred feet or so of Napoleon signing his abdication, or a close-up of Lincoln delivering his Gettysburg address!)

Little did the mechanics of twenty years ago realize that they were perfecting the instrument of a new art. Yet within a few short years after its start as a purely mechanical "stunt" for the amusement of the so-called low-brows, the cinema became the most far-reaching, if not the greatest, art the world has seen. As the Seven Arts are old as human records, the birth of a new art becomes an epic event pregnant with extraordinary results.

Vivian Vane came into the pictures at their artistic

birth, and the five or six years following were years of tremendous consequence both to the new expression and the fortunes of its high priests and votaries. It was a time of discovery, experiment and expansion. The original mechanics were followed, or superseded, by artists, potential and actual; stage stars, realizing the greater opportunity both in salary and the size of audiences, deserted the footlights for the camera; theatrical adventurers, seeing tremendous possibilities for supershowmanship, splashed in with sensational organizations of stars and directors; then at last, more cautiously, but with the same ultimate intoxication of the enormous profits to be made, the financial gamblers took a hand, regarding the moving pictures as the bluest chips on the table.

Thus, for these first historic years the cinema pot was boiling over. New companies were formed over night; mergers took place at noon, and at night an actor, believing he was working for the Superstar Studio, would read in the evening paper he had been sold, body and breeches, along with the lights, props and sets, to the Hyperfilm Company. The greatest indoor sport of the movie people was guessing day by day for whom they were working.

It was during this time of sudden growth and tremendous earnings that production costs rose from a thousand dollars a reel, such as Tessie Boggs worked in at the old Climax, to stupendous sums—in some cases—of a hundred times that figure, and salaries

jumped from two hundred dollars a week, which Cutie Cutura considered munificent in 1910, to five thousand dollars a week, which was gladly paid to mere children, without exciting the least surprise.

Naturally the intense boiling produced sensational changes. Many bubbles rose to the top, to last but a moment; and many dregs went to the bottom. Among the bubbles one witnessed the cinema collapse of scores of the stage's greatest stars. Among the dregs one found many of the great pioneers, producers who, because of their artistic shortcomings, or commercial incompetence could not maintain the pace.

Then there was the question of public taste, which grew so rapidly that a great favorite of to-day was discarded to-morrow. Montaigne Belmont was one of the first of the "pretty boys" to succumb before the immemorial truth that lurks in the story of Beauty and the Beast, for many of the new heroes were upstanding fellows, but plain; dimples and sport shirts gave way before hard muscles and manliness.

When the Climax was absorbed, Gatz lasted for a time as studio manager of the new company, but after two years his name was dropped from the minds of movie makers.

Driver, because of the momentum of his past successes, managed to enlist new capital in his ventures, and when last heard of was directing serials, the final refuge of the old time "punch" director.

As for Kitty Pilky, she was never heard of after

a few pictures. She was merely one of the hundreds of girls, candy-faced youngsters, with the minds of chickens, who were ravished from the streets and music halls—and even places less polite—by some of the early impresarios, and sent out on a celluloid ribbon to enthrall the proletariat. As the pictures grew in artistry, and self-respect came to the bosses, there was a tremendous slaughter of these innocents. Some of the most overadvertised stars shone brightly for a while, but only so long as the financial cocaine was applied to their exploitation, while others were given thumbs down in spite of financial backing, because the popular taste was changing to actors of ability. A glance over the lists of those forced stars of the early 'teens reveals a startling number of cinematic fatalities.

One more item in the multicolored changes in cinema fortunes during the five years of Vivian's journey to the stars: In the fourth year even Capt. Brilig succumbed to the inevitable consolidating process, and though he gained financially by the transaction, his famous name disappeared forever from the films. Though Vivian was heartsick at separating from the eldest of her godfathers, she had now become such a tremendous money-maker that an independent company was formed to produce pictures under her own name, and the Vivian Vane Pictures Corporation became one of the units installed at the Great Filmart Studio, where several other famous stars were "shooting" under similar conditions. Under the new arrange-

ment, Ben McGowan became production manager at a salary almost equal to that of the President of the United States.

XXIX

WHILE thus having sketchily traveled the kaleidoscopic road leading to Vivian Vane's great achievement, let us glance for a moment down the five year vista of another path and see how fared the hero of her dreams.

Strange as it may seem, there are great social compensations lurking in one's ability to land a knock-out blow. So elemental is man's worship of the purely physical, that a prize fighter may dine with a king, while a poet starves in an attic. As it would not be quite royal for his highness to put on the gloves with his lowly subjects, the only way he can show his interest in cave-manhood is to invite the superbrute to "tiffin."

Most Americans, being sovereigns, also enjoy their athletics vicariously, the only exercise they get being a mild form of calisthenics observed while "rooting" in the bleachers for the experts on the field who are doing the real work, or in the wild rush to get on the first street car—there may be fifty cars in line—after the game. One wonders why five thousand gregarious men should call their organization an Athletic Club when its most popular sports are entirely sedentary.

Of course a player may have to chalk his cue, or during a serious game of dominoes the apoplectic banker may have to reach seven times to the boneyard to match the double six, but these are the athletic limits of forty-nine hundred members.

Of the odd hundred who have taken the name of the club seriously, a handful many be seen in the gymnasium every day. These are the strenuous do-it-now, go-get-'em business men, self-consciously swinging clubs or puffily prancing around the track in a tragic effort to retain or get back their figures. These enthusiasts, however, are "nuts," listed by the nonperforming members in the same class with the dietary disciples of stewed prunes, carrots and other "roughage."

However, an Athletic Club must have athletes, if only to entertain its members, and so the governors search the schools and colleges, the highways and byways, for likely lads who ordinarily are too young or too poor to pay the usual high initiation fees and stiff dues, and they give them "athletic memberships" which carry the privileges of the gymnasium, baths and training, and the prestige of performing under the colors of a famous club, with the chance of a delightful trip or so to the games in some distant city. In order to maintain the purity of their amateur standing, these entertaining athletes are required to pay nominal dues of perhaps two dollars a month.

Naturally the fame of Jan Morsowski had reached

the various clubs of New York, and after flirting amiably with several of them, to see which promised the greatest advantage, the young Polish Cyclone accepted the offer of the Olympic. At the first monthly smoker, Jan trimmed the champion of the Knickerbocker with such éclat and speed that he immediately became a great favorite with the forty-nine hundred static but blood-thirsty Olympic fans; but it was among the nuts and the young college fellows who were supposed to keep the Olympic colors nailed to the athletic masthead, that he made his friends.

Every day, from five to six, the strenuous few who really believed they belonged to an athletic club met in simple equatorial trunks and went through their various stunts, afterwards mixing in shameless nudity in the showers and the plunge. Now there is a great democracy in nudity. Carlyle shows with recondite profundity how in a public bath a king and a constable are reduced to a very common denominator. Thus it was in the Olympic gymnasium that rich men, poor men, beggar men (there are always a few in every club) mixed in a happy freemasonry of perspiration and steam, for the most part having nothing more than a bathing acquaintance with one another.

Among the "nuts" there was one quiet though friendly man of business who must have been quite a boxer in his youth, for he could give Jan a very entertaining battle for a few short rounds, and their mutual

interest in the sport brought about a pleasant gymnasium acquaintance.

"Jan," he said one day, when they were both lying in the steam room after a lively bout, "I heard about your turning down a purse of $500 to meet Red Eagan in a return fight, and you did quite right. You're too bright a boy to turn professional; but we all have our price, lad, and some day you are going to find it hard to turn down the big money. Why don't you give up this fight stuff and get into some good business before it's too late?"

"Nothing I'd like better, Mr. Morse," replied the pride of the East Side, "but a reputation like mine is hard to live down in one's own town. I'd like to go some place where they'd never heard of The Polish Cyclone and start all over again."

"What do you want to do, Jan?"

"Well, I wanted to be a violinist when I was a kid; but since I've been taking up science in night school, I've got my heart set on an engineering course, if I can ever see it through."

"Um!" said the elder man, without making further comment.

While dressing in the locker room they talked about commonplace things in general, but upon taking his leave, Jan's sparring partner took out a card. It read: Batchelder, Morse and Buchanan, Oil Investments, 603 Petroleum Bldg., Chambers St., New York.

"Jan," he said, "if you can get away from the print

shop to-morrow at twelve, I wish you would run up to my office, and we'll have lunch together."

Instantly recognizing the name of the famous firm of promoters, Jan accepted with a naïve simplicity and happy candor that were his greatest charm. Then hurrying back to his room down on East Eighth street, he pressed up his blue serge trousers in preparation for the important social event. Social? No, in the back of his head, Jan had a feeling there was a business significance to his invitation, and during his three hours at night school he was alive with the mysterious possibilities held for him in the morrow's adventure.

As the two men took their seats at a small table by the window of the Petroleum Club on the top floor of the "Oil" building, their physical contrast was striking. If a stranger had been asked to identify the "Cyclone" he most surely would have chosen William T. Morse. A large, thick-set man of a hundred and eighty pounds, with a square chin "shaved blue," a short "tooth-brush" mustache and closely trimmed hair, he gave the appearance of strenuous, robust manhood; Jan, now that he had begun to let his close-cropped hair grow to normal length, looked more like the poetic violinist he had once hoped to be. But though there was an almost effeminate grace about the younger man, an alert observer might have noted the quiet strength that lay behind his apparently languid eyes.

"Jan," said the senior member of the oil firm (Batchelder had been out for several years, though his

name still appeared in the company's title) "how would you like to go out and work in our California oil fields? It would be outside work, and you'd have a chance to develop your mechanical ambitions. Oil engineers and oil geologists are in great demand now, and the work has all the fun that goes with a sporting proposition, for you are gambling with Mother Nature, the squarest and most thrilling gamble in the world."

"Why, I'd love it, Mr. Morse, but——"

"Then I'll tell you what you do," replied the man of business, ignoring the 'but,' and driving right to the purpose he had evidently been giving much thought to. "First of all, slip the sport writers a little item saying you are going to Poland to fight for your father's country. It would be a romantic story, and they'd play it big. Then anglicize your name from Jan Morsowski to John Morse, which will dissociate you forever from the prize ring, beat it out to California, and if anyone asks you who you are, refer them to your Uncle Bill."

"Why—" Jan's eyes lost their sleepy dreaminess for once; smiling boyishly he tried to speak, but the oil magnate had not finished.

"Besides losing your fighting identity, simplifying your name will unload an unnecessary business handicap. You'll be amused to know that my grandfather was a Czech who came to this country in sixty-eight, bearing the influenzic name of Morsonovitch. My

father struggled along with it until my granddad died, then changed it to Morse, and so for two generations now we've borne that good old English monniker."

"Well, I must say the name John Morse ought to get me somewhere in the oil business, especially when the drillers learn that my 'Uncle Bill' is head of the firm."

"If the name doesn't earn you respect, you can always beat up a few of the huskies just to show 'em you can stand on your own pins."

"Well, 'Uncle Bill,' I can't tell you how much a chance like this means to me. I haven't a tie in the world and I'm willing to start to-morrow."

Several weeks later, John B. Morse of New York presented a letter of introduction to the manager of the Midway Jennie Oil Co. of Bakersfield, California, and when the manager saw from whom the letter had come, he was all for making the applicant the big boss of the works.

"No, I've come out to learn the game," said the quiet young man. "I'm to begin at the bottom, or I suppose in drilling, one begins at the top. Well, in any event, I'm here to work with the roughest of them."

Nowhere in the world do men look rougher than in the oil fields; the smeary goo blackens saint and sinner the same sinister hue. But among these terrible looking drillers and pump men the new arrival was amazed to find a decided sprinkling of fine, up-stand-

ing college fellows who toiled thus during their vacation in order to put themselves through school. Here was an idea; new, but so alluring to Jack Morse that he immediately communicated his desire to "Uncle Bill," who, delighted with his ambitions, wrote and gave his approval provided "Jack," as he began to call him, would major in oil geology.

Thus it came about that while Vivian Vane was going through Capt. Brilig's unique school of culture and dramatics, Jan, only four hundred miles away, was carving a name for himself at Stanford both as a student and athlete. It was in football particularly that he excelled, making the varsity team in his sophomore year.

Like many rich easterners, William Morse came to California every winter, always spending a happy week at Palo Alto with Jack, and it was not long before the two men developed a personal intimacy that ripened into real devotion; and upon Jack's graduation not a parent in the great audience was prouder of his son than Uncle Bill was of his "nephew."

As the local representative of Batchelder, Morse and Buchanan, Jack settled down in Los Angeles, and within a year of his coming was generally known as one of the rising young business men of the town, taking his place in society as easily and gracefully as though born to it. The Jan Morsowski of Cyclonic punches was now a mild-mannered man of the world, less suggestive of the fighter than ever.

XXX

ONE evening late in the fall, Jack drove to the University Club, parked his car, and ascended the elevator to his room, not stopping to visit his friends in the reading room as was his custom. It was only nine o'clock, but the young man undressed, quietly donned his pajamas, sat down in his big luxurious chair and looked out across the park where the lights of the Pig'n Whistle sign played pranks of humor and delight. It recalled to him another sign of the long ago, where a pig pursued a nervous bean around the façade of a building, the latter always keeping a bean's length ahead of his pursuer.

What a change had come into his life in these last six years and how strangely the wheel of fortune had turned up for him. "I wonder," he thought, "what has ever become of Tessie Boggs." Her transparent devotion had flattered and amused him at the time, but now he looked back upon it with a great pity. Poor little starved slum child, so hopeful and ambitious and full of dreams! And such a sport!

Jack's meditations were interrupted by the ringing of the telephone.

"Oh, is that you, Mr. Morse? . . . Why, I'm giving a little supper in our Japanese garden on Wednesday evening and I should like very much to have you come. It is to be quite informal but many of your

friends will be there. I am also inviting a few of the movie people—the nice ones, you know. May I count on you? At seven o'clock? Wednesday?"

"I shall be delighted to come, Mrs. Westlake, if I don't have to run up to Bakersfield. I'll know in the morning and phone you."

"The movie people," Jack said to himself, as he hung up. "Does she think them an inducement?"

Thus it was that while Jan Morsowski, now Jack Morse, sat and wondered about little Tessie Boggs of the long ago, Tessie, now Vivian Vane, the famous star, only ten miles away in Hollywood, reclined upon a chaise in her splendid boudoir, and as she picked up a volume of Joseph Conrad and learned to her surprise that he was a Pole, her mind also soared back along the years to wonder what had become of Jan. So complete had been Vivian's metamorphosis that it had become increasingly difficult to believe that she was ever Tessie Boggs, and though she still cherished Jan's picture, he had finally dissolved into a beautiful memory that came to her like a faint perfume out of the past. Yet there were times, and this was one of them, when she pictured the might-have-happeneds her fertile imagination conjured up. In her untrained youth, Jan had been the "one man," and now that she thought she had forgotten him, she was still searching for the ideal he had at one time been to her.

The Conrad book had started Vivian on a dream voyage of wonderings. She wondered if Jan had been

killed in Poland, or perhaps, now that the Russians had overrun the country, if he might be a prisoner in Siberia. Then again, what if he hadn't gone at all? The papers were so undependable. Perhaps, as Mac had once laughingly suggested, he had taken an Irish name, which seemed to be the fashion among non-Irish fighters. If so, he had no doubt lasted two or three years and then gone "the route." Perhaps—but no, Vivian could not believe that Jan would go wrong. She preferred to think of him as a national hero in Poland, or at least living in splendid martyrdom in far-off Russia.

In the midst of these haunting conjectures, the telephone beside Vivian rang through its silk and lace enclosure.

"Yes, Mrs. Westlake," she replied, "I shall be glad to come. You've invited only four of us movie people? Well, I think even that is very courageous. I feel very much flattered that you will risk subjecting your friends to our blighting presence— But seriously, Mrs. Westlake, I'll be delighted to meet some other people. I get tired of talking nothing but pictures, morning, noon and night. . . . Yes, indeed, I'll look my prettiest and bring along a lot of charms I never get a chance to use on the lot . . . Good-by." Vivian smiled in anticipation of meeting some of the younger men of the town among whom, as Mrs. Westlake had told her, was a Mr. Jack Morse, "a young man who came down from college only last year."

XXXI

NEVER did the grounds of El Mirasol look more charming or more exactly suited to their purpose than on the evening of the Russell Westlake's garden supper. Standing beneath the great tan-and-orange canopy that shaded the brick court at the back of the house, one looked out upon a scene like those painted on theater curtains.

Immediately below the court a long Persian pool, running straight away toward the west, lay like a huge silver mirror on the soft surface of the gray-green lawn, and reflected with exquisite symmetry the tall row of eucalyptus trees that rose majestically above the delicate lacelike peppers forming the background of this famous "location." With the sun setting on the axis of the garden—as it did at this time of the year—the picture had all of the poetic allurement and decorative balance of a Maxfield Parrish fantasy.

On this balmy summer evening, with just a touch of the sea in the air, some fifty guests were scattered about the garden like figures in a Watteau print. The varicolored dresses of the women, and the harmonious gayety in the native costumes of the Japanese servants as they silently and gracefully shuffled about placing tables here and there, gave the scene a carnival suggestion of intriguing beauty.

Leaning by the casement of the open French win-

dows of the dressing room on the second floor, Vivian Vane looked down upon the picture, and was gently thrilled by it. She had worked in sets quite as theatrical, but she was always aware they had been cheated, and that beyond the transplanted trees—withered within a week—lay a forest of scaffolding and electric cables. But this!—ah, there was no make-believe here.

Nor were the people she saw mere "extras," dressed in rented clothes, and trying to act "classy" for three dollars a day—the luckier ones in "soup and fish" getting five. No, even the characters were real. One thing, however, puzzled her. In Movieland, dress was well ordered, and at any prescribed function the assistant director knew exactly what his marionettes were to wear; but she noted no such standardization in the garden below her. With the delightful sartorial confusion obtaining in California—for the citizenry have come from the four winds and brought with them fixed habits of conscience and clothes—she saw some of the men in formal evening dress, others in tuxedoes, Palm Beach suits, flannels, or "outing tweeds"; there was even one proud fellow in a tight frock coat. Evidently the 'extras' of society had no assistant director to tell them what was what.

To one whose life is lived in mimicry, the real may seem unreal; as Vivian watched the figures strolling about, she observed that they did not indulge in the unctuous "action" cinematically believed to occur at all

fashionable gatherings. The men were repressed in their gestures and the ladies did not "make merry-merry," in the least. Even among the young débutantes, not one of them went "gishing" about, clapping her hands, or running in circles in "girlish abandon." Evidently real people didn't act very well, for they just walked through their parts.

Yet Vivian liked it. Her lifelong hunger for "nice things" was drinking in the scene to the full. It is true on certain occasions she had participated in several social functions, but only as a movie queen, to allure loose pennies to fashionable charity; but at this party she had been invited as a guest; a social equal—and she was exquisitely happy.

Suddenly she was startled by a voice behind her—there were ten or twelve women in the room, arranging their gowns and powdering their noses. It was a beautiful voice, soft and deep, but the message it bore to Vivian froze her to her place.

"Would you believe it, Hortense, Amy has invited some of these movie creatures here to-day. However, I knew it would come; money and vulgarity—they'll break in anywhere."

"But it's just like Amy, my dear. She'll invite anybody. She'd have a bishop and burglar to dinner if she happened to like them. But what do you care, they may be very nice. Who are they?"

"Well, there's that silly little doll, Vivian Vane, with the sweet smile and the blonde shavings hanging

around her neck; and that pretty idiot, Bertie Beldon, the he-doll. They came together as usual. She's going to marry him."

"Are they engaged?"

"Certainly. Everybody knows it. He tags her around like a lap dog."

"Who are the others?" asked an alert spinster.

"Well, Miss Drummond, for one—five thousand dollars a week and she couldn't run a switchboard. And Clarence Cutler, the dimpled doll who——"

"Clarence Cutler!" exploded the spinster. "Oh, where is he now? I'm just crazy to meet him."

Vivian, faint, and blushing to the roots of her hair, stood staring out of the window till all of the others had left the room. Then, turning to the glass, she looked at herself. It was cruel, but it was true. They *were* "shavings." And she remembered that among all the girls she had seen in the garden below, not one of them wore such an exaggerated coiffure. She unpinned a row of the blonde curls that were supposed to make her look more girlish and, sticking them in her vanity bag, went down stairs. But the lights had gone out for Vivian! She had been led to the very gate of real society, and then had her face slapped. Her smiles thereafter were frightened and wistful.

Mrs. Westlake was a charmingly informal hostess. Dispensing with dinner cards, she allowed her guests to get together by natural gravitation; but with shrewd social foresight she had also seen to it that her lions

should be separated and each seated with agreeable companions.

"Harold," she had instructed, "I want you to have Miss Vane at your table, down near the lily pond; and Gertrude, you see that Mr. Beldon has at least three of the younger girls at his table."

When at last the party was seated at the various tables placed about in the semiprivacy of protecting palms and bamboo screens, Vivian found herself with "Harold," another adoring young man of tender age, a Mr. Anson Warde, a dynamic fellow of about thirty-five, and three young matrons, only one of whose names she could recall—a Mrs. Phipps, the one who had been addressed as Hortense in the dressing room, and who had been the least offensive in her comments.

Vivian for a long time had been quite aware that "society" looked upon the "movie people" with suspicion. She had often heard the subject discussed on the lot. She knew the men were rigidly excluded from the best clubs and the girls invited out only as curiosities and to boost fashionable charities; but she had never believed that the prejudice carried itself to the point of bitterness she had heard this evening. It was pleasant, therefore, to hear Mr. Warde so ably championing her caste.

"Yes," he was saying, after the first breaking up of the conversational ice, "it makes me tired how this town treats the movie folk—swindled by the shops, and sneered at as upstarts by people whose oldest ancestors

are still alive and swapping real estate. I want to say right here that they've done more for Southern California than oranges or climate. Furthermore, they've given this old western burg the only color it's ever had."

"Yes," put in the tall youth Harold, "they knock the movies, but they all talk about them, I notice. I'll bet they are the subject of conversation at every table here this evening."

It was true, "the movies" were the one vital topic. Far up at the other end under the striped canopy, Cyril Rex, the famous director, was cynically holding forth in defense of his profession.

"What surprises me," Mrs. Talbot had said, "is how well they behave in a place like this. The day I had the Cutter Company at my house, even the cowboys seemed quite at ease among my treasures."

"You will pardon me, I'm sure, Mrs. Talbot," Rex replied, "but the fact is that our actors—even the extras —are so used to luxuriating in handsome sets, or perhaps I should say, gorgeous sets, that they were probably not particularly impressed with your beautiful home."

"But *my* rugs and tables and tapestries are real!" exclaimed the astonished lady.

"So are ours, Mrs. Talbot. As I go about town, I am constantly recognizing beautiful furniture that I have used in our sets. You see we rent it before it is sold."

"Well, I never!" exploded Mrs. Talbot. "Is nothing sacred to us any more? I expect you'll be asking us to appear in your awful pictures next."

"The question was already in my mind," replied the smiling Rex. "I have been so charmed with this party and the beauty of the women as they strolled about that I was going to ask Mrs. Westlake's permission to use the garden in a story I'm doing. Of course, to have it right, I should have the same guests."

"Why, Mr. Rex, I think it would be a perfect lark, and I've always wanted to see how I looked. Don't you think it would be splendid, Catherine?" and Mrs. Talbot's eyes shone with a great anticipation.

At Herbert Beldon's table the forces were lined up somewhat paradoxically, for Herbert Conningsby Beldon was assuming the attitude of his distinguished family—"the Beldons of Boston."

"Why should society accept us? Yes, I say 'us' for I am temporarily one of them. Why should society accept stage people, just because Europe does? Europe is not America, and thank Heaven we still have a New England conscience. The stage with its lower standards—well, there's Lillian Russell, married seven times, wasn't she?"

"It doesn't seem to me that matrimonial varietism is confined to the stage," asserted Miss Helen Kingsley of Berkeley Square. "How about Henry the Eighth? He pranced to the altar every spring, didn't he? And we have a handsome ex-prize-fighter right here in

Hollywood who already threatens Solomon's record. And neither Henry nor the Kid are, or were, actors in the strictest sense of the word. I think you're unfair to your profession, Mr. Beldon."

Though Vivian, of course, could not hear all these conversations, the unctuous defense of her profession so vociferously spoken by Mr. Warde could not reconcile her to the slams she heard in the dressing room, nor to the snatches of dialogue that drifted to her through the pampas grass separating her end of the table from a little group close by and evidently not favored by the presence of one of the four lions. What she heard was so shocking to her spirit that, cruel as it was, she was alert to hear it all. In order to do so she had to invoke a most difficult technique of acting, listening with one part of her mind and giving apparent attention to Mr. Warde with the other.

"But have you *seen* Harriet Handsome's new place?" she heard a giggling voice ask. "Well, you talk about your movie queens! Harriet is royal right down to the rampant lions on her porch. And as for her new million-dollar automobile—baby blue and chintz . . ."

Vivian, smiling at Mr. Warde, winced, for she too had lions on her front lawn, and she had thought they were rather fine. Furthermore, her automobile, though not upholstered in chintz, was of a very bright and vivacious color.

"I went to see her Friday," went on the voice with

sweet savagery, "to get her check for the Freemont Hospital; and I'll say this: She's not stingy. But, but—but! You should have seen her boudoir where she received me. Lined with mirrors from end to end, and set in every angle so that little Harriet reclining like Mme. Récamier, looked at herself in every attitude she could assume. All the time she was talking, she was fussing with her curly locks and giving herself a delicious eyeful from her looking glasses."

Vivian recognized the portrait as true to life. She had seen Harriet's crystal boudoir and hadn't been particularly shocked at its vain significance. As physical beauty was the capital of many movie actresses, they cultivated it as a matter of course.

But the greatest blow came when the merry little party began to talk of the greatest dinner ever given in Movieland—a dinner that had impressed Vivian at the time as the last note in service and grandeur.

"Say, Patsy Donlin certainly rang the big gong that night!" It was a young man's voice. "He was out to make a hit with his New York bosses and to show the movie bunch real class. Patsy's a good old scout and he knows what's what, for he used to drive a taxicab for the hotel, and now that he's making five thousand a week directing features, he wanted to give a dinner equal to his new job."

"Yes, of course, Mr. Warde," said Vivian with a faint, wan smile, and his half of her mind. "The

movies are indeed still in their infancy." The good old bromidiom started Warde off again, so that Vivian could get the rest of the comments behind her.

". . . they had a long table, raised, mind you, whereat only the big cheeses sat like Royalty—Donald Fairfax, Mme. Mozoff, the great Russian actress, Vivian Vane, Gloria Gorgeous, Harriet Handsome, and so on, while the lesser stars gathered at smaller tables scattered around the great dining room. And then, the music—the symphony orchestra? Ha, ha, you're a tight-wad, Hal. He had *three* orchestras—a bunch of coons, a Chinese outfit and a jazz band; and as soon as one stopped another began. I tell you it was the big noise. And champagne! The Johnstown flood was a dust-storm by comparison. Why, the waiters were stealing it by the case."

"I shouldn't have thought the Alexandria would have stood for such rough stuff."

"On the contrary, they were sublimely proper, even those whose batteries were alcoholically overcharged. This was supposed to be a classy affair and they were all doing their darnedest to act like 'ladies and gentlemen.' And to show you that it was a social success, Mamie Innesteppe, the Clingstone bathing girl, said to me with tears in her eyes, 'Patsy's some little entertainer, eh, Ben? Three bands, five thousand dollars worth of booze—and not a fight.' "

At this climax they all laughed immoderately and

the conversation at Vivian's table was slightly interrupted; but Warde still had some floral tributes for his clients.

Then from the next table: "But why hand it to the movie people? It seems to me I've read of monkey dinners in New York, and parties where the guests all drove into the banquet hall on horseback. You admit, Ben, that they *tried* to act like 'ladies and gentlemen.' Considering the fact that a lot of them have made their money overnight, they're amateurs in vulgarity."

Vivian turned slightly to see who the new speaker was. As she gazed into the eyes of the young man on the opposite side of the table, she felt a quiet but agreeable shock. It was not his charity to her cause that held her, for Warde had quite outdone this modest defender, but it was something in his personality. She was glad the dinner was breaking up, for it gave her a chance to maneuver around until she could get a good look at the young man. For a full minute she surveyed him closely, then hurried off to find her hostess.

"Mrs. Westlake," she said, "who is the young man with the dark hair, in the white flannels, talking to the girl in the blue and white organdie?"

"Why, that is Jack Morse, the Stanford halfback. He's the young chap I wanted you to meet.—Here, Jack," she called, and before Vivian could protest her embarrassment, he had come up.

"Jack, I should like to present you to Miss Vane, Miss Vivian Vane."

"Mr. Morse," answered the girl simply, a slight blush rising to her temples. Looking into his far away eyes she was conscious of an agreeable warmth.

"I know Miss Vane already," he began as Mrs. Westlake left them. "I have seen you so many times, on the screen. I know the remark is trite—but it's true."

"Do you think one can know a person through her screen character?" asked Vivian without lifting her eyes.

"Yes, I think so."

"Then tell me what you know about me?" she replied.

It was his turn to color.

"Can't we walk down through this path?" he said, playing for time. "Our California twilights are so short," he went on as he made way for her through the bamboo thicket. "We sat down by daylight and now it is dark, but—aren't these Japanese lanterns charmingly arranged?" They were now in a magic opening in the thicket with no one there to share their privacy but a little carven Pan, peeking eerily at them from his stone pedestal.

"Tell me," he said abruptly, as he took his seat beside her, "why do you always play the Cinderella motif? It is so false to life. Princes do not ride down into the alleyways and rescue poor little girls from

poverty, and rich young men don't go to the slums for their sweethearts."

"It's because my boss likes it," she replied. "They call it 'sure-fire stuff,' and it permits me to play the first part in rags and then end the picture in all my pretty clothes."

"I suspected you were not responsible," he replied thoughtfully, "for I have noted little bits in your pictures which made me believe you understand people and would do splendid things true to life—if you were permitted."

"But I agree with my bosses, Mr. Morse," answered Vivian. "They are not all educated men, but they know the human heart better, I think, than some of our intellectual critics. After all, the Cinderella theme represents a hope. Every little girl dreams of a beautiful prince coming some day to take her to his palace in the forest. I think its quite within the province of art to represent our dreams, don't you—even though they never come true?"

"But suppose the little girl is already a queen—a movie queen, say; does she still dream of a super-prince coming to take her off?"

"I suppose not. Then she is prompted by another motif—that of Santa Claus, the Lady Bountiful. *Her* dream is to go down and rescue some poor struggling young poet from his poverty."

"And is that your dream, Miss Vane?"

"Yes, I think it is. But not a poet—a—a, well, I don't know what he is doing at present."

"But don't you think the mésalliance would be quite as tragic as when the prince does occasionally marry the pauper?"

"Perhaps," she answered wistfully, "but that is my dream."

"Oh, Vivian!" came a voice, followed by the sudden appearance of Herbert Beldon, who had evidently noted her disappearance into the magic bower in the corner of the garden.

"Vivian, I don't like to interrupt your tête-à tête, but Mrs. Westlake has asked everybody to come into the music room; Strandburg is to play."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Morse," said Vivian softly, and as Jack Morse gazed at the girlish figure before him, with her loose blond hair and her simple white fluffy dress, she reminded him of nothing so much as an exquisite bit of Dresden china. "Yes, I'm very sorry," she repeated. "I liked your question. Pardon me, have you met Mr. Belden?"

Belden bowed and shook hands stiffly. "Come along, Vivian," he said, taking her very possessively by the arm.

"So that is it, eh?" thought Jack Morse as he strolled slowly back to the house.

During Strandburg's delightful playing Vivian's eyes wandered about the great music room, out into the hall, and through the high French doors leading onto

the court, but nowhere did she see a sign of her new friend.

"You are not going, Vivian?" exclaimed her hostess when her prettiest "lion" came up after the music to say good night. "Why, it's only half past ten."

"Yes, I must, Mrs. Westlake," she replied. "You know the night life of most of us so-called movie stars is very stingy. When I'm at work on a picture, I'm in my little bed every night at eleven o'clock at the latest."

"Why, bless your heart, you *are* a working girl, aren't you?" and Mrs. Westlake kissed her protégée affectionately.

"Come, Herbert," said Vivian, starting for the stairway; but all the time she was putting on her wraps, she was wondering why Morse hadn't come to say good night.

XXXII

"WHY so pensive, little one, didn't you have a good time?" asked Herbert Belden of the girl huddled up in the corner of the limousine.

"An interesting time," she replied.

"That's one advantage of our profession, Vivian. We are so enormously interesting to the villagers."

"Yes, we seem to be," replied the girl wearily.

"Oh, Vivian, you mustn't get sore when you hear our bunch roasted. They don't mean *us*, for *we* belong. Everybody knows the Beldens of Boston, and you can bet they've looked up the Vanes in Who's Who, and were properly impressed. No, they're taking a fall out of the rank and file of our colony. You'll have to admit, little one——"

"I'll admit nothing, Herbert. Tell the man not to drive in. I'll get out here and walk up to the house."

"But——"

"I prefer to walk up, Herbert. Good night."

"Why, Vivian, what's the matter, have I——?"

"Oh, it's all right, Herbert. You were very good to bring me home."

Stepping out of the machine, Vivian walked slowly up the long path leading to her great gaudy house, and as she saw the big blue car disappear down the street, she went and sat on the stone seat near the sundial. She had had two blows this evening: one in learning what "society people" really thought of her profession, and the other in Herbert's acquiescence in those views.

Reflecting on her first meeting with her dashing leading man, she recalled how he had impressed her with his aristocracy. He was one of "the Beldens of Boston" and seemed to have come as an ambassador of the culture and ease her æsthetic little soul had always believed so beautiful. But somehow to-night Herbert had lost caste when he appeared among "his own

kind," for she felt he had been obsequiously disloyal to her and all her friends.

Nevertheless, Vivian realized that there was some truth in the slams she had heard administered to the taste of the "movie bunch." Looking up at the "magnificent home of Vivian Vane," pointed out each day by the sight-seeing guides, she had a sinking feeling that such an architectural pile—the former owners called it "Georgian," while artists were less charitable in their adjectives—was entirely out of harmony.

And those lions! Now that her attention had been called to them, she laughed a little hysterically at their rampant efforts to impress. Silly, vain cats! That's what they were—sniffy cats, holding their noses high above their shields upon which not the slightest trace of heraldic design had been attempted. She wished for a piece of chalk that she might write something appropriate on these inviting surfaces. "See! Vivian Vane lives here!" She had no chalk, but she had her vanity bag, and so she powdered their fierce noses and their regal dignity suffered total eclipse. Laughingly she ascended the broad tile steps to the "Venetian" doorway, but there was no mirth in her laughter.

Letting herself in by a key, Vivian stood alone in the half-lit immensity of the hall and gazed about her at the heavy, highly polished mahogany woodwork and the flamboyant furniture that "went" with such interior treatment. She felt like a wee, white Lilliputian in the house of a rich giant. She remembered now

that she had been persuaded to buy it by Mac—who, always alert to publicity, thought it enhanced her position. Now, however, after returning from Mrs. Westlake's beautiful home with its rich simplicity, it overwhelmed her with its garish splendor.

Walking into the "library," that was almost guiltless of books, she sat in a huge overcarved Japanese chair whose arms, legs, and back were fashioned into horrific dragons with ivory eyes protruding from their grotesque faces, and looking about her she uttered but one word,—"Props!" The drawing-room beyond, with its Louis XIV pink and gold walls, seemed like a set in a story she had just made, purporting to represent a "swell society home." She wondered if her technical director had ever seen a home like the one she had visited this evening.

Then to the "Italian" music room, the "Flemish" dining room, and the "Dutch" kitchen. Well, at least this catholicity of taste was not hers, she had inherited it along with the Georgian façade and the concrete lions.

Vivian ascended to her boudoir and as she turned on the lights her eyes fell upon a stack of publicity clippings, which Marie, her maid, had set out for her to see. Aimlessly picking up the topmost sheet, without removing her wraps, she stood gazing upon a "layout," showing a picture of the house with several "interiors" clustered about it. "Vivian Vane's $100,000 mansion," the story was labeled. She laid the

sheet down unread. The cost, the cost, always the cost! She remembered, that very morning, hearing the megaphone man on the sight-seeing bus calling out to his pop-eyed passengers, "The magnificent home of Vivian Vane, America's great screen artist. Them lions you see in front there came from her ancestral estates in England and the duty alone on them was $60,000. . . ."

But after all what did the cost of things matter when one was making $10,000 a week? The megaphoner may have slightly exaggerated his impressive estimates, but there was no fiction regarding the charges for her "props." Timid of her own task at the time of purchase, she had turned over the furnishing of the house to professionals, and had received a bill for $87,000. It is true, that when McGowan had the bill checked over, it was found that many "pieces" sent out on approval and returned had been included in the charges, and after a legal threat the furniture company had "adjusted" the bill, to $51,500! Why had she ever bought all this stuff? She never really wanted it. Was it a sense of power? Yes, at first. It had seemed very wonderful to say: "Mac, I want a town car with deep blue velour upholstery." And when he asked: "What make?" to answer: "Why, the best, of course."

Yes, she had said that very thing. Yet Mrs. Tevis, one of the richest women in the state, had come to see her about a Red Cross subscription one day in a Ford

coupé! Things, things, things! No, this was not what she wanted. Depressed beyond words she sank onto her lounge and turned off the lights.

"Are you in bed, Mam'selle?" came a voice at the door.

"No, Marie, but you needn't wait. Good night."

What was it she wanted? Success? No, she had that—such as it was. She was rich beyond her wildest dreams, and a world applauded her. Her art? She wondered! Was it her beauty? If so, her days were short—beauty is so ephemeral, and public taste so vacillating. Had she not seen it change almost over night? She felt the insecurity of her position. "I must not think of failure," she mused, and rising abruptly, turned on all the lights and undressed. With her golden hair hanging about her shoulders, she propped herself in bed and began to read the script of the picture she was at work on. She had promised Cyril Rex, her director, that she would study the next twenty scenes very, very carefully.

But Vivian's mind had been stirred by so many things that she could not keep her eyes on the typewritten page. "Scene 411. Iris in on Minnie entering back door of slum room. She is tired and disheveled. She . . ." and the types ran all together in a blue blur. She laid the script on the table and turned out the light.

Sleep, however, was far away. Lying back limply against the pillow, Vivian looked out of the window;

far away over the lights of Hollywood, she could see the brighter lights of Los Angeles. One of the large signs on an office building blinked rhythmically; she thought of The Beanery. "Success? What is it?" she asked herself. When she had been working as a waitress, she envied Dorgan's lazy wife; next Kitty; Driver's cheap leading woman Cutie Cutura—why she had lived in an utterly unattainable world. And here Vivian was now at twenty-three, famous. She wondered why her silly head hadn't burst with vanity on that publicity trip to Chicago. Heavens, such a reception! But curiously enough, in the midst of the applause she was frightened. She wondered why. Yes, success had had its thrills. She remembered the joy of reading her mail when first she burst upon the screen as a star. Then, as it increased and the percentage of begging letters grew greater and greater, it began to lose its salt. A bushel of letters a day indicated a certain kind of notoriety, but when ninety per cent of them were requests for photographs "to add to a collection," the compliment was somewhat diluted. There were always a few, of course, that gave her a real thrill, kindly letters of love and appreciation, with no follow-up requests for anything.

Then there were certain letters, even though requesting pictures, that touched her deeply. Her fan-mail secretary had distinct orders to submit all communications to her that obviously came from slum children and factory girls. The secretary often won-

dered why Vivian would cry over these simple penciled letters, and what she said or did in reply, for she always answered them personally.

Yes, Vivian had tasted what the world calls success; the circle was completed. Just as the millionaire envies the poor artist or the healthy young machinist, now Vivian would like nothing better than a house like a home—and something else!

It was that something else for which she *really* longed. Of course, she still had her dream of Jan, but that was so far, far away she had nothing left to remind her of it but his picture on her writing table. Then there were Mac and Bess whom she loved dearly, and Hank and his good old wife for whom she had sent in her first success—these four guardians of her secret—her secret shame, which fortunately time was completely erasing. Bud? Yes Bud was a dear boy, but——

In the last few years, she had had the attention of many men. Some of them fine, no doubt, but she had a suspicion that it was her fame that had allured them. Herbert Belden had been her most persistent admirer and was no doubt superior in birth and culture to most of them, but she felt he could never love anybody as he did Herbert.

To-night at the Westlake dinner it had been given to her to see herself with the eyes of the world—a vain, materialistic little upstart. The shock had been severe, but curiously welcome. "Having prepared

myself for society," she said to herself, "I shall now keep out of it." But the episode of the evening that had compensated for all the heartaches was her meeting Mr. Morse.

Dear old Mac would be immensely amused if he knew how the young man had fascinated her. "I'll bet it was because he looked like Jan," he would say. "You'd like a burglar, Vivian, if he walked like Jan." It was the truth. "He looks like Jan *would* have looked had he been born to better things," she admitted. "The soft tenderness of his eyes was just as I remember Jan's, that night of the brawl when he looked at me with his unbandaged one. The night Jan patted me on the top of the head! Couldn't you see that I liked you, Mr. Jack Morse? I must have shown it, for I felt myself blushing. Yet you never asked to see me again. Oh, well, perhaps you are in love with some other—luckier girl. Should I invite you to come to see me? Well, not yet—at least, not in this great vulgar mausoleum."

"Hank," said Vivian the next morning at the studio, "I want you to take a truck and your crew over to my house and bring those stone lions over here. You can have them in your ridiculous prop room. Then, I have a lot of furniture I wish to send over. I'll have it all tagged to-night and you may get it to-morrow."

Sitting in the dressing room of her "cottage" on the lot, Vivian rang for her manager, and he entered while

Marie was trying to make her young princess resemble "Minnie—a girl of the tenements."

"Ah, Mam'selle, your make-up is not well made. But, *voila!* how should you know how the poor slum girls look?" observed the worshiping maid.

"Mac, I'm going to move," announced Vivian, without the least introduction to the subject. "I want you to sell the big house, and this afternoon we'll run around and find something smaller and less gaudy—to rent if necessary. And I'll take from the 'museum' only the few things I need. That big barn depresses me."

"Heavens, Vivian," replied the astonished McGowan, "you talk as though you were losing money. Do you know what your income will be this year? Over four hundred thousand dollars!"

"I don't care if it's a billion, Mac. I am tired to death of just things, things, things."

"Vivian, you're in love," replied her manager with an impish grin.

"Mac, I've always been in love," she answered wearily.

XXXIII

THOUGH the general manager of the Vivian Vane Company was inwardly and visibly disturbed, he had learned from experience that his blue-eyed little star had a mind very much her own, and that in certain matters of taste she would brook no

interference. What worried him most was a growing positiveness of decisions that was becoming very embarrassing for the production office, for recently the young lady had been even editing the sets, designed by the famous Waldemar Wyckoff, and the way the sets were dressed, notwithstanding the well-advertised fact that Miss Bonville Greenwich, ex-editor of *The Bungalow Beautiful*, was responsible for the chaste selection of props and furniture. When the star began to overrule the taste of such celebrated experts, it was no wonder the general manager should give thought to the situation.

"Miss Albers," he said, turning to his secretary, "call Mrs. McGowan over at once," and as the alert blonde plugged in to the Research Department, the manager looked out of his window, nervously vibrating a pencil between his teeth.

"Bess," he said when his handsome, smiling, ample wife appeared in the door, "what do you think she's done now?"

"Decided to give up pictures and go to Spain where she can buy a fairy castle?" and Mrs. McGowan laughed as she plunked down into the large leather chair and prepared for the worst."

"Well, almost as bad. She's ordered me to sell El Grando at once, and we've got to go looking for another house to-day."

"It was bound to happen, Ben. I knew she'd sicken of that terrible place, sooner or later."

"Bess, you make me tired. What's the matter with that place? Heavens, it's got everything in it from a steam laundry to a billiard room, and it's the show house of Hollywood. Why, I've had Benny keeping tabs on the rubber-necks, and he found that over three thousand people a week drive out to see it, over six hundred photographs were shot by fans in seven days. There's real publicity in that. They all flock back to the home state with these little intimate souvenirs and it gives 'em lots of class among the neighbors. Benny also learned that not one-half as many fans drive by that Spanish dump of Gloria Gladsome."

"But, Mac——"

"Don't interrupt me. And now she smilingly says: 'Sell El Grando—' and when I ask her what sort of a place she wants now, she says: 'Oh, a large place with lots of grounds, a swimming pool, and a bamboo thicket, and hidden away off where nobody can see it.'

"Do you get that? Now, Bess, no girl who is the public character that Vivian is, has a right to hide from her public. Won't you have a talk——?"

"Mac, dear, don't get all excited over Vivian's growing spirit. She has always had much better native taste than she could express, or was even aware of. At first, because of sheer fear and lack of confidence, she accepted anybody else's judgment as better than her own. You remember how she acquiesced in allowing Mrs. Worcester to be her 'mother,' and how sweet and gentle she was with her for two years, and then how

you were so shocked when she came to you one day and said, 'Mac, I'm afraid I'll have to divorce Mother. All this money has gone to her head, and she has become a terrible spender. She's much more extravagant than I am. Besides, I think other things are beginning to go to her head, too, for I can often detect strange odors on her breath.' You remember that, Mac? While Vivian was growing, 'Mother' was going to seed. Yet you were quite disturbed because Vivian was going to 'crab the publicity,' as you put it."

"Yes, and then she got in that Miss Hennequin, a charming, decayed aristocrat, who robbed her blind."

"Yes, Mac, Vivian is trustful and her best judgments are often swamped in her genial expansiveness —really one of her sweetest qualities—but she is quicker and surer than either of us when it comes to a mature decision. Dear old Miss Harlow, who has that class in the study of English literature at the Girls' Studio Club, tells me that Vivian always does the best reading, and what's more to the point, the best thinking, of any of those hungry youngsters. Now that her taste is outgrowing the tinsel showmanship that we've heaped upon her, she ought to be encouraged rather than opposed. Honestly, Mac, I am delighted that she wants to sell that awful house."

"Aw, hell, Bess, I might have known that you would back her up. The trouble with you darn women is you don't know the value of good publicity."

"Why not confine her publicity to her work and let

the poor girl have a little privacy and live the life she wishes to?"

"But the gang wants to know how she lives. And if there's no color to her 'domestic happiness stuff,' they're disappointed. What the fans like to read is how Vivian Vane eats eau de cologne on her breakfast food. If they thought she was a nice, mousy little girl who graduated from a high school, lived in a bungalow, and went to bed at ten o'clock, they'd think, well—I couldn't even put over the story; it isn't publicity."

"Oh, you and your old publicity stuff, Mac. I tell you Vivian has earned her release from that sort of attention."

"All right, Bess, but for the love of Mike pick out a place that at least will look decent on a postcard."

XXXIV

"BERTIE, you're not afraid of messing up your pretty hair, are you?" It was Cyril Rex speaking in that quiet way, which carried more real punch than the angry bellowings of some directors. "I thought you said you played football at college?"

"I did."

"Well, you went through this like puss-in-the-corner. A football scene, Bertie, has got to be played with real abandon or it will *look* faked."

"It isn't that I'm afraid, Cyril," replied the hand-

some Belden as he stood among his muddy team mates on the field of battle. "But suppose I should be hurt? The delay would cost the company a lot of money."

"We certainly can't hold up production because of injury to a high-priced actor," answered the director with a faint smile. "I'll have you doubled for this scene. It's a day, boys!" and the company piled into the waiting automobiles and hurried back to the studio.

"Miss Vane," said Rex on the long trip in from Occidental Field, "you remember Jack Morse, the famous halfback of Stanford—you met him at the Westlake party. It would be a corking thing if we could get him to make this scene—doubling for Bertie," and Rex showed on his face that he was visualizing the realism of the action. "Do you suppose," he went on, "that he'd be willing to give up—say, a Saturday afternoon? We would even shoot it on Sunday if he preferred."

At the mention of Jack Morse's name, Vivian's eyes brightened; and the suggestion of having him work in *her* picture started her heart on a happy race. "I'll ask him," she replied simply, eagerly glad of the excuse.

It had been three months since Vivian had met the football hero of California, and her pride was hurt to think he had never made the slightest effort to follow up the acquaintance. He had not even asked permission to come to the studio to see her work, an almost universal request. But now she had a perfectly good

reason to send for him. That very night she sat down opposite Jan's picture and wrote a charmingly worded, though carefully studied, note, and had it taken to his club by messenger.

All the next morning while working in some studio sets Vivian awaited an answer with a hopeful expectation that would have puzzled her intimates, for she had not signified in the slightest degree anything more than a detached interest in Jack Morse. Secretly, however, she had learned all she could about him, and the more she heard, the better she liked him.

The freckle-faced messenger, belying the classic joke regarding his dime novelish divertisements, had delivered the note within the hour, so that when the young oil superintendent emerged from the elevator of his club, he was haled to the desk.

"It's lilac time in Loos-ian," quoted Tom Bates, the clerk, from the latest geographical coon song, at the same time holding a lavender colored note to his nose and rolling his eyes. When Jack received the missive, it was easy to see what had prompted the ribald remark. The scent was unmistakably lilac.

John B. Morse, being an oil engineer, and not a movie actor, enjoyed few perfumed notes, and the adventure quite thrilled him. Walking briskly to his room, he opened the envelope and, glancing at the signature first, hurried to the text.

"Well," he reflected regretfully when he had read it, "this is just *business*—'doubling for Belden!' . . .

Belden—yellow as mustard! . . . Of course I'll accept; it may lead to a *social* invitation. . . . But Belden won't do for you, Vivian. He's all on the outside, while you're a thoroughbred to the tips of your beautiful fingers. . . . Well, well, Jack! Here you are raving just because you got a note from a movie queen! Be yourself! Be yourself! . . . Odd handwriting you have, Vivian—queer Y."

He sat down to write his acceptance.

> "Mr. Jack Morse presents his distinguished compliments to Miss Vivian Vane, and begs to state that he will 'double' anything from a halfback to a glass-eater for the regal privilege of serving 'Queen Fillumena.' All he asks in return is that the Queen will tell him another of her pretty dreams. As to Mr. Jack Morse's time—it is at Her Majesty's command. . . ."

When the news spread around the lot that Jack Morse was to double Bertie Belden in a football scene on Saturday morning, the whole company was interested, for Morse had the local fame of an Olympic champion, and many were the stories told of his prowess. "You'd never believe he'd be such a savage on the field, if you could see him at ease. He's the mildest-eyed and gentlest creature I ever met."

Vivian had insisted upon sending her own limousine rather than a studio car, for the distinguished double,

and though noting the compliment, the young man was rather disappointed with the experience, for with his distaste of show (especially in the presence of the six or eight of his clubmates who happened to be present at his departure) he felt conspicuous riding through town in such feminine splendor. Oh, well, after all, she was a movie actress; and they were evidently all alike in their motor vanities.

While the football player, hiding in the corner of the richly upholstered car, was speeding noiselessly through the city and out the long boulevard to Hollywood, Vivian Vane in her dressing room, making up for her part, had the script propped up before her, studying the scenes they were to make that morning. To her great chagrin she found that she was as excited as a schoolgirl.

"Send for Mr. Rex, Marie. I wish to see him at once if he can come over."

"Mr. Rex," she said, as the greatest of the Filmart directors entered her little studio cottage, "Frank tells me this doubling will change some of our scenes because we can use Mr. Morse only in the long shots. But I don't like to cut that tackle episode right in the middle just to get Herbert into the picture. Couldn't we finish the scene with Mr. Morse? With his back to the camera and that headguard on, no one will ever know it isn't Herbert."

"Certainly we can shoot it that way, Miss Vane, and I think it would be lots better; but Bertie is going to be

awfully sore. You know how he likes the clinches—especially with you." And Rex looked knowingly at the little actress whose face he could see in the mirror. "How about Morse? Does he know what he's in for?"

"Oh, no, Mr. Rex. And you'd better not tell him until we start the scene. He might be too embarrassed. Just pretend you thought of it at the moment. I want to get a good, convincing bit of action out of this." Thus, with feminine ingenuity Vivian took advantage of her profession to stage an introduction to her new friend that would at least be unique—and, perhaps, promising.

In all Movieland there was no more resourceful assistant director than Frank Deneen, who, learning of a football game to be played that very day between the fast Pomona team and Occidental College, arranged to shoot his scenes just before the scheduled game, thus using the regular players, instead of a lot of hired extras, and incidentally getting his "crowd stuff" for nothing.

Fortunately Belden and Morse were built on the same graceful lines, so that when they donned football suits, identical even to elastic bandages around their left calves, the actor and his double looked like mere reflections of each other.

"Mr. Belden will explain the action on the way over," said Rex, addressing his distinguished helper as he took his seat in the studio car, ready to be whisked out to the Occidental Field.

"You're supposed to be playing left half for Yale," began Belden as they were off on their way. "Harvard kicks off; you receive the ball—they may have to do it several times before it comes in your direction, you understand. Then you start down the field with the regular interference, but when you get to the forty yard line, you cut loose for yourself, and though tackled by half the Harvard team, you manage to fall just over the line for a touchdown. Number Two camera will get the follow shot; and Number One, which is stationed down the line, will get the touchdown. So you must be sure to fall just in front of the camera, and be doubly sure that your face isn't showing, for that is supposed to be me."

"Then, don't you play at all?"

"I'm in the picture later on but, of course, they couldn't risk me in any rough play. The salary of a star is so large, Morse, that delays in shooting because of accident are almost fatal to the cost of the picture. No, the studio wouldn't listen to my playing to-day, as much as I wished to do so. After the touchdown we cut and I'll change places with you on the ground, assuming your exact attitude, mud and all. When the camera picks up the scene again, it is apparently the same as when you were tackled. It is now seen that I am hurt, and as I am lifted up limp and exhausted, Miss Vane, who in the script is in love with me, dashes out of the grandstand, and to the amazement and

amusement of the crowd, runs up, throws her arms about my neck and kisses me."

"In other words, I do the work, and you get the reward," laughed Morse good-naturedly.

"Well, of course, that is necessary," answered Belden with heavy seriousness, "for I am the hero in the story."

"And do you accept a salary for such heroisms?"

"Oh, you see we do it so often that it's commonplace. I tell you, Morse, that girl is a wonderful girl to kiss," and Belden nudged his companion meaningly.

A quiet but dangerous rage took possession of the double that made his face burn and he began to fidget in his seat.

"Of course, I mean only as an actress," added Belden, when he noted the effect of his remark.

"I imagine it's a situation very easily profaned."

"Oh, yes, of course, there are bounders who take advantage in the clinches," replied the hero righteously, "but after all the girl can stop them if she wishes."

"How?"

"By just assuming that, of course, the man is acting, and not responding too much."

"And then not talking about it, I suppose?"

"Yes, that's the trouble with a bounder, *he* talks about it."

"I wouldn't say it's any trouble to him." . . . But the car had drawn into Occidental campus and Belden was asking directions to the dressing rooms.

So used are Los Angeles audiences to movie methods that the great crowd in the college stadium was not in the least surprised when, instead of seeing the Oxy and Pomona teams appear on the field, the famous elevens of "Yale" and "Harvard" (wearing sweaters supplied by Deneen) ran out upon the gridiron and began tossing the ball about. The crowd had already noted the cameras and were therefore prepared for any surprise.

Deneen, running about with nervous efficiency, placing the cameras here and there and distributing the players, at last seized a megaphone and addressed the north grandstand.

"Folks, we're going to shoot a scene for the Vivian Vane Company, and if you want to see yourselves on the screen, watch the play all the time, for if any of you look into Number Three camera here—that's to get the crowd stuff—the picture will have to be cut. Now remember—no rubbering."

In this particular part of the world where the million residents were all actors, real or potential, these happy, howling students could be depended upon to watch the play and register the proper emotion. There was not enough novelty in a camera to elicit the slightest inquisitiveness.

After but one rehearsal of the kick-off and long run, Rex was so satisfied with the spirit of the players that he called for action. On the second try it was seen that Morse would receive the ball, and when the direc-

tor called "Camera!" everybody knew the scene was in action.

Down the field came the famous Stanford back behind a beautiful interference of four men, and at the appointed mark opposite No. 2 camera he ducked sidewise, broke through his interference and started toward the goal, alone. With Morse dodging and running like a scared antelope, it was not necessary to fake the action, for try as they might, tackling high, low, or amidships, not one man on the "Harvard" team could hold this fast, elusive, catlike halfback. Once when he was tackled by two at once, he jumped clear over the crouching figure blocking his path and turned a complete somersault when he struck the ground, but rolled up onto his feet again and was off like a shot. At the end of the field, with three men hanging to him, he plunged over the line for a touchdown.

"Now, Milton, jump in there and do that referee stuff," said Rex, who had stationed himself by No. 1 camera.

"You're not going to make this scene with Morse, are you?" interrupted Belden, standing by, muddy and out of breath (he had been running around the field to get himself in that condition.)

"Out of the way, Bertie," replied Rex with impatience. "Don't bother me. Can't you see I'm busy?"

"Now, Milton," he went on, "it's a touchdown." The white-shirted arm of the "referee" shot up out of the tangle of prostrate figures announcing six points

for "Yale"—the camera all the while grinding away.

"Crawl off there, men," came sharply through Rex's megaphone. "Uncover Morse and let me see him lying on the ball. Fine! Don't move, Morse. Now, Walton, you see he's hurt—register a frown—stand up and signal the side lines for a doctor. . . . Great! Now roll him over but keep his face from the camera. Now, Morse, try to rise, but you are weak. Help him, boys. Now start off. Ready, Miss Vane!" called Rex. To the shocked astonishment of Herbert Conningsby Belden, and to a more pleased astonishment of John B. Morse, the famous Vivian was seen to run forward in her pretty white dress and college colors, and, hesitating for a moment so the camera could register her pained distress, she threw her arms about the injured player and kissed him shamelessly and affectionately before five thousand cheering people.

"Fine!" called Cyril Rex. "Register surprise and amusement, boys—now cheer." While this action was taking place, Vivian Vane held her hero tightly in her arms, permitting her pretty frock to be muddied from top to hem.

"Cut!" called the director with a happy smile. "That was something like it." (And he thought: "Some of our he-dolls ought to be drilling oil wells and some oil drillers ought to be acting.")

"Say, Mr. Rex, what was the big idea of playing Morse in the clinch?" asked Belden, trying to repress his anger.

"It was Miss Vane's suggestion that we shove the scene right through. She was afraid it would look cheated otherwise, and I agreed with her."

"It was Vivian's orders?" repeated the leading man with astonishment, turning away sullenly. "Guess I'll have to look into this," he added to himself.

"You were a perfect dear to have done this for us, Mr. Morse," said Vivian, standing before the heaving and muddied halfback, and trying to appear quite professional regarding the amorous episode. "Were you really hurt?"

"Not at all. If I had been, the reward would have been worth it," he replied with smiling gallantry. "But why didn't you tell me what was coming?"

"Oh," she exclaimed (and the lie came glibly), "Mr. Rex wanted it this way and he was afraid you might not care to do it. 'And,' he said, 'if he shows surprise and embarrassment, so much the better.' I'm so glad you didn't mind. You couldn't have acted better if you had been a professional."

"Then—there's no chance for a re-take?" he asked impishly.

"Unfortunately, no."

In making ready for the return to the studio, Vivian insisted that Jack should ride in her car, in spite of his mud. "You're very hot, and you should ride in a closed car—you might catch cold," she said with motherly concern.

"Now, Miss Vane, as I am at least an imitation

hero, I think you might tell me what the story is all about," said Jack.

"Oh, it would take too long to tell—now."

"I'd like to hear it very much sometime—especially if it takes a long time to tell it."

"Couldn't you come to the studio on Monday and see the last scenes made? Then I'll arrange to tell you the first part, in some quieter place—perhaps at my house in the evening."

"I could come about three o'clock. Would that be too late?"

"Not at all. We hardly get started before noon." Which wasn't a big fib considering the circumstances.

XXXV

WHEN Jack Morse presented himself at the Filmart Studio next day, he learned that royalty was hedged about by many barriers, for it took six functionaries fifteen minutes to discover that his presence was not anathema in that exclusive plant.

"We have to do this, Mr. Morse. You've no idea the number of tourists who pile out here every day, some with the best credentials. If we let 'em all in, we'd never do any work, many of them, just as you, insisting that they have had invitations from the stars. Miss Vane should have given you a note."

This was no doubt quite true; yet Jack, chaperoned by an office clerk, approached Stage 6, where Vivian

Vane was working, with a decided feeling of unwelcome. Picking their way over a floor strewn with a tangle of lighting cables, he and his guide arrived on the outskirts of the set while the action was in progress. Tiptoeing up to a respectful distance behind the camera, Jack stood unobserved among the "grips," "juicers," "props," and other functionaries that always form a modest gallery for the actors.

Like many local residents of Los Angeles, Jack had never seen the inside of a great modern studio; his recollection of picture making held over from an experience many years before when he had worked in a fight story at the old Climax. He knew nothing of the great strides made in studio equipment and technic since those primitive days. At that time the director was czar, painting his picture almost single-handed, but the scene before him now was evidently a highly complex social effort, for the juicers were under the direction of an expert, the camera man had great authority in the composition of the picture, and even the director, who was responsible for the action, consulted with his actors and continuity writer.

Although Jack hardly expected the whole show to stop upon his arrival, yet he could not help but feel—particularly between scenes—that his presence was simply tolerated. Once or twice, during rests, Vivian looked in his direction, but as she wore heavy amber glasses he could not tell whether or not she recognized him. Then on several occasions the director—the same

one who had put him through the football scene—passed in front of him without the slightest sign of recognition. Jack noticed, however, that the man was thinking deeply. No other director in Movieland felt his responsibilities as keenly as did Cyril Rex. Knowing his superior intelligence over most of his co-workers, he assumed a detached Napoleonic attitude that inspired tremendous awe. With his hand to his chin, he would stand before the camera—a splendid figure in riding puttees and open shirt—and looking at the set, would contemplate his manikins with the lofty attitude of Jove about to move a few mortals here and there upon the chessboard of nights and days. When Cyril Rex was thinking, cosmic consequences were aborning, and his staff respected the miracle in silence.

It must have been the final scene all right; for Vivian was standing by a giant fireplace, when Bertie, in evening clothes, entered the room unannounced and walked cautiously down stage, hat and coat in hand. Turning suddenly, Vivian saw him; and Bertie, dropping everything, rushed forward and held her in a tight embrace. It was a love scene of intense feeling—and Jack realized he was experiencing a decided repugnance for Belden. The scene appeared unduly long and too convincingly real, and he was disappointed to see that Vivian responded so gloriously.

It was unfortunate for Jack, however, that he could not have heard the little dialogue that was spoken during that romantic fade-out.

"Not so tight, Herbert," whispered Vivian, as her "hero" drew her to his breast.

"But I mean it, Vivian," he whispered back, breathing deeply.

Blushing crimson beneath her make-up, Vivian finished the scene, and then turning to Belden said in an undertone: "How dare you take advantage of your part? Don't ever attempt such a thing again!"

Jack Morse, standing in the crowd behind the camera, did not hear those remarks; and all he saw was a love scene in which both parties seemed realistically happy in the action.

"Why, have *you* been here all the time?" asked Vivian, as she spied her friend after the last close-ups were shot. "I've been watching for you all afternoon, but these lights blind one so I couldn't see beyond them. I left word to be notified as soon as you came."

"I just came in time to see what these irreverent fellows call the clinch, and I must say it was very—convincing."

"Oh, did you like it? I'm so glad. It is hard to do love scenes in the pictures without offense. I think the close-ups make it too intimate, don't you? And affection can be quite as well expressed by a gentle caress as by—brutal violence. Won't you come over to my cottage and wait until I get dressed? You can have a cup of tea. Come, let's get away from all this clatter."

Jack had read of Vivian's "cottage" that had been built on the Filmart lot, though he had thought of it only as a publicity stunt of no real use; but as his tired, yet vivacious little hostess escorted him along Avenue D, behind the big glass stage, down past the laboratories, he saw over in the corner underneath some giant pepper trees what seemed to be a small thatched house wherein Red Riding Hood might have lived. Furthermore, as he drew near, he saw that it was not a "set," but built solidly for use.

"Oh, yes, it is a real house," answered Vivian, to his expression of surprise, "but it was built in two days. You know, Mr. Morse, you are now in Fairyland, the workmen here are all magicians. If a technical director says, 'Let there be a palace,' lo, in a few hours, there is a palace, all ready to shoot in."

As they entered the heavy hand-hewn door opening under the thatched roof, Jack felt that he had been suddenly transported from a hectic, confusing world to some remote, romantic corner of a far-off country—yes, even Fairyland—for the interior was in perfect keeping with the quaint walls and windows of the ancient façade. Great beams supported a low ceiling extending the whole width of the big living room; a massive stone fireplace at one end gave the place a note of comfort and intimacy. In the center a heavy oak table supported a vase of gorgeous dahlias, a bowl of fruit, and books and magazines.

"Can you make yourself comfortable while Marie

washes off this dreadful grease paint?" asked Vivian. "We won't be long."

"Oh, yes, indeed. There are several books here I'd like to dip into."

And Vivian disappeared into an adjoining room.

Sitting there in the big armchair, Jack Morse did little reading. Instead his mind was trying hard to sort out and organize the conflicting impressions and emotions that had come so suddenly to him in the last few days. He had not got very far, however, when the door of the dressing room opened again and Vivian came in, bright and refreshed, wearing a smart gray tweed suit and a white sport hat which made her look smaller and younger than ever.

"And now, Mr. Jack Morse, you are going to dine with me at my house. No. It is all arranged."

"All right," he replied with smiling resignation. "You are the director; you'll find me a bad, but amiable, actor."

XXXVI

THERE is no denying that Jack Morse's ego was immensely flattered by the perfectly frank admiration of the great actress, Vivian Vane. Of all the thousands and thousands of admirers all over America, why had she picked on him? He was not tall, robust, and dashing, like many of the men stars; he was not rich; he was not famous. He felt

himself just a fairly intelligent, well-working chap who had been very, very lucky in his choice of uncles.

"Perhaps," he thought, as they drove off in her big machine, "she is one of these sincere students of the drama who are forever studying 'types'—and I'm a new sort of bird to her."

But though Jack was honestly and modestly puzzled by these sudden attentions of the famous movie queen, he was none the less happy in wondering what lay just around the corner. He was glad she had "arranged" for him to dine with her. He wished to see her in her own environment, yet he dreaded the thought of the house she lived in. He had seen pictures of it in the magazines.

They had left the highway and had driven for a mile up a smooth, winding, but unpaved road, when the big car came to a stop before two high wire gates and Kono, the chauffeur, got out and unlocked them.

"Why, I thought you lived in Hollywood, Miss Vane!"

"I do—this is in Hollywood, but this part of it, buried in these hills, is as remote as though it were in the high Sierras. That's why I came here and bought these forty acres. When I leave the studio I crave, above all things, to be away from the crowd. There is nothing here for the tourists to see, excepting a high fence to keep them out. I'm afraid you are going to be disappointed in my place, but I like it. I warn you —it's just plain house."

"Well, I *am* surprised, for there's a great big house in town that's been pointed out to me a dozen times as your home."

"Oh, those megaphone fellows! They have the most delightful way of filling up all the houses along their way with celebrities, regardless of their owners. Three girls from the Studio Club and I took the big bus that is supposed to show the passengers the studios and the homes of the movie queens, and it was the greatest fun I ever had. Why, he had Vera Vedas, the vamp, living in Dr. Haynes' big colonial house, and Don Fairfax was sporting about the big Farnsworth estate. Those megaphone fellows are evidently intended to entertain rather than inform."

"And where did he have you living?"

"Oh! in a great big barn of a place with two silly lions guarding the gate from infuriated artists."

"Well, this is a charming surprise, Miss Vane," said Jack as he descended from the machine and turned to look about him. After entering the wire gates the road had led alongside an orange grove—a perfectly commonplace screen in California, for a perfectly commonplace ranch lying beyond, but Jack had noted that the grove ended abruptly on the edge of a barranca, and as soon as the car wound its way up toward the house, crossing and recrossing the dry creek bed, there was no other sign of ranching or cultivation of any kind. Now, turning about to look back, he could understand Miss Vane's emphasis on the word remote.

Buried in between two high hills whose soft rounded sides were stenciled with live oaks showing warmly green against the dried and sunburned cover growth, and backed up by the high mountains beyond, the little valley opened toward the south like a Greek amphitheater. Standing on the rustic porch of El Nido (it really seemed like a nest in the hills) Jack looked out between the great gnarled trunks of the huge oaks whose well groomed and twisted limbs formed a decorative tracery of brown against the deep green of their lofty foliage. From the grayer green of the middle distance he saw the majestic shafts of a formal row of towering eucalypti breaking the deep perspective into six or eight panels across which, far, far away, in the mysterious distance, he could faintly see a jade-green strip of the peaceful ocean, with Catalina floating on its quiet surface like a fairy island of unreality.

"My, what a place to dream in!" he said. "All it needs to complete the picture is a little white sail way off there on the ocean."

"Yes, and sometimes the little white sail is there," she replied. "Do you believe in fairies?" she asked suddenly, looking up into his face.

"Of course I do. Fairies often sit on a fiddler's bow when he plays the violin. And I know there are bad fairies down in the bowels of the earth who break our tools in the oil wells."

"Oh, I'm so glad you believe in them—so few people do."

"But there are no fairies for them. There are only fairies for those who believe in them."

They turned to go inside.

"You'll pardon me if I express my surprise at this house, Miss Vane," said the young man when he entered the large living room with its vaulted roof and exposed beams. "This is more like a studio—or a young chapel," he added with a smile when he beheld the tall Gothic window over the balcony, below which stood a pipe organ. "You know, we outsiders are led to believe that our movie queens go in for all sorts of royal establishments, with gold chairs and stairs, and even golden bath tubs. I might think you were not a success."

"No, and I haven't a ten-thousand-dollar Pekinese poodle, nor a thirty-five-thousand dollar fur coat made from the almost extinct bongo. But I know one or two girls who have—at least their publicity says they cost that much."

"Well, you had the advantage of having been born to good taste. After all, we shouldn't blame the other girls, who started shabbily, and who, now that they have loads of money, wish to drag culture in by the price tag."

"To feel and show a sense of power?"

"That's it exactly. We all love power and when we get it we want to show off. The millionaire with his racing stables, the college boy in his sixty-horsepower bear cat, and the oil driller, who one day finds

himself with a big wage, blowing himself for a sixteen-dollar shirt. It's all the same."

"Then I don't believe I love power, Mr. Morse."

They were now sitting on a long, luxurious, soft divan facing the "landscape window" which framed the fairy scene that had so fascinated Jack from the low porch.

"Yes, you do. But it is probably of a different kind. There is the power one has from what one gets, and the power one has from what one gives. Then there is the power one has for adding to the sum total of human happiness through art. That is your power, and you love it."

"That's a comforting thought, Mr. Morse. Then you don't think——"

A car had driven up and a short, ample, bald man wearing big horn spectacles got out.

"Oh, Mac, I'm so glad you have come," exclaimed Vivian, patting the new arrival affectionately on the back. "I want you to know Mr. Jack Morse, who was good enough to do that football scene for us."

Introductions over, Vivian excused herself for two reasons; she wished the men to visit alone; she wished to look her prettiest at the dinner table.

"Well, Mr. McGowan, this is certainly a fine place."

"Would you like to look around? I think the house is wonderfully designed for this climate; an improvement even on the Spanish."

"You seem to be more than her manager, Mr. Mc-

Gowan," ventured Morse, as he noted the personal pride and almost hostlike interest of his guide.

"Yes, I'm a sort of relative, too. In fact, her family probably never would have consented to her going into pictures if Bess and I hadn't agreed to look after her. Now that her mother is dead—it's too darned bad she couldn't have lived to see her success—the poor youngster is pretty much alone, and that's why she's so glad we are here with her." McGowan was loyal to his publicity.

By this time they had crossed the patio toward the left wing. "Oh, Vivian," called the proud relation, "may I show Mr. Morse your den?"

"Certainly, Mac," came back the muffled reply.

The room was on the very end of the wing, with windows on three sides, commanding a view in all directions.

"This is where she works on her script, and reads——"

"And watches the fairies under the oak trees," came a voice from the next room.

"Oh, you and your old fairies," snorted the matter-of-fact McGowan.

"You want to be careful there, Mac. Mr. Morse believes in fairies too and maybe he'll turn you into a hop toad or a gargoyle or sumth'n."

Suddenly the blood left Jack Morse's head and he steadied himself by holding the back of a chair. There on her dresser in an ornate silver frame he saw his

own picture, a picture of himself taken in a previous incarnation.

In those far-off days the sight of his photograph on a girl's dresser would not have caused him the slightest concern, for the Polish Cyclone was enormously popular with the young ladies of that remote world. But what was it doing here?

Realizing that the slightest recognition on his part might lead to an uncovering of his dead past, he gathered his wits together, and stepping to the window, swept the whole half circle of its panoramic view. "Yes," he said, but his lips were dry, "this is a wonderful place to dream in."

But he was thinking: "Perhaps that is why Miss Vane invited me here. One doesn't meet a man with a dead and buried past every day. Perhaps she finds me amusing."

XXXVII

DINNER that night was a mixed experience for John B. Morse, nephew of William T. Morse of New York, and he was glad of the presence of Miss Haven, Miss Vane's companion and secretary. She was bright and vivacious and took more than her share of the social responsibilities. One moment Jack would be expanding with joy to think *he* should be dining with the popular Vivian Vane, then the next he would be seized with terror. Was

this whole thing a trick? Did she know who he was and was she studying his face out of the corner of her eye? Was that picture just set out to trap him into a facial confession? The circumstance was very strange. If she got it at the time it was taken—when he was the Polish Cyclone—she must have been a very young girl, not over thirteen or fourteen (he judged her now to be about twenty) and what would a fourteen year old girl in a fashionable boarding school be doing with the photograph of an East-Side pug? And why the prominence? It was the only picture on her dresser. There was nothing accidental about that; no, it was placed there with great deliberation, else how account for the frame? He had never seen such a frame. Furthermore, it must have been made for this particular purpose, for a highly chased silver mat covered all of the photograph except the head which showed through a round opening in the top. If she had his picture, she certainly must know his name. And heavens, anyone hearing the names together would know that John Morse is merely Jan Morsowski Anglicized. Then that curious dream thing she told him at the Westlakes. Perhaps she mentioned going down into the slums to find her champion just to see what reaction a talk of the slums would get out of him.

These were the thoughts that kept bobbing up all during dinner, and though he acted splendidly, he felt, in his self-consciousness, that he was acting. He man-

aged to join in the rather light talk and the general gayety, but he was not of it.

He was relieved beyond measure when the dinner was over, and he thanked God for the gentle custom of serving coffee in the living room, for now he would not have to face Miss Vane's accusing and penetrating glances. When he saw McGowan preparing to take his leave, he grabbed at the excuse to make his escape.

"You'll do nothing of the kind, Mr. Jack Morse," spoke up Vivian with a pretty pout. "If you *really* believe in fairies you must wait and see them dance when the moon comes up through the oaks. Kono will drive you home when the time comes."

What could he do? No man could or would fly from such an invitation. Besides, as much as the young man wished to be alone and think things over, the situation fascinated him. Furthermore he did believe in fairies.

Never in all Jack's dreams was a stage more romantically set than on this September night when he and Vivian sat alone—Miss Haven having discreetly gone to her room—in the patio of this sylvan retreat, and looked out through those magic oaks, across the luminous arabesque traced by the lights of the distant city, and saw the moon come up over the Baldwin hills like a giant golden ball.

"Do you see them?" she asked, leaning forward with her chin resting on her hands.

"Yes, I see one," he answered dreamily. "I think

she is the princess, she is so blond and beautiful."

For a long time they sat silent, and then, though he realized he was skating on thin ice, he spoke: "Miss Vane, if it is not an impertinence, would you mind telling me whose picture that is on your dressing table?"

She hesitated what seemed to him an interminable time. He thought: "She is framing her answer with great care." But in reality the delay was caused by an exquisite flash that had come to her.—"He is jealous!"

"There's a story goes with that picture," she finally said, slowly lying back among the pillows and pulling the light blue Spanish shawl about her shoulders.

"When I was a little girl I knew a waitress who was madly in love with a very beautiful young foreigner, who worked very hard supporting his mother and learning to play the violin. Then it turned out that he was a wonderful boxer, so fine that he won over all his opponents, until he was making lots and lots of money prize fighting. It seems she had never met her hero but worshipped him from afar and had his picture on her dresser all the time."

Inwardly excited but greatly relieved, the young man, with his face in shadow, interrupted: "How did she get his picture, if she never met him?"

"Oh, she sent for it. He no doubt got many letters from silly little girls, for he was very beautiful and a great hero among the people she knew, but he sent her the picture, and she loved it."

"What became of the pretty romance?" he asked,

trying not to show an impatience that was burning him up.

"She died," exclaimed the girl abruptly. "And he never, never knew how he had been loved. Isn't it a sad little story?"

"But how did you get the picture?"

"Oh, yes, I forgot to tell you. She was a—a—a sort of a personal maid to me. She started across the continent with me, but the poor girl died in Chicago. When she was dying, she asked me to take the picture and keep it, and some day to go down into the slums where he lived and tell him all about it; and see if I couldn't help him become a great violinist or poet or whatever he wanted to be."

"And did you?"

"No, but as the years went on, he became a sort of fairy hero of *mine*, and I often think of him, and now that I am a 'queen,' I dream of some day going back there to find him. But it is probably best to keep it as a dream, for no doubt he has never amounted to anything. Mac laughs at me and says that he's probably a 'pork-and-bean fighter' now, in some small city."

A long pause.

"I'm going to tell you something, Mr. Jack Morse," said Vivian at last, "You remind me of the poor little maid's fairy hero. Do you mind my saying that? I know how stupid it is to tell a person he reminds one of someone else but——"

"On the contrary, I am very much flattered; but

also I'm frightened, for it's hard to live up to heroic ideals."

"Well—" Vivian hesitated, and then looking him squarely in the eyes, added with charming frankness: "You are awfully like him"—she had to think quickly —"as Thelma described him to me."

The moon was now well up among the branches of the trees. A mocking bird in the canyon below was trilling through his astonishing repertory. Then the faint sounds of the nine o'clock bell came floating up from Hollywood.

"I must go now, Miss Vane."

"I'll call Kono," she replied.

They both felt that this was the point to "cut" the film.

As Jack Morse lay back luxuriously in the handsomely upholstered limousine of the great film queen, his mind was in a puzzled muddle trying to force a vagrant memory to patch this crazy pattern of amazing incident together. "A waitress in a boarding school?" —"Thelma?" He could not recall any such name or incident. And why had Vivian assumed the inheritance of such a foolish fancy. A strange girl. But stranger still, this extraordinary coincidence, temptingly fascinating to play with, but very, very dangerous. Suppose he should betray himself. No, she is allured by an idea that has become an ideal. The unreality of the thing is what intrigues this imaginative girl. The discovery that the fairy prince had become

a respectable oil driller would be fatal. No, he must be very, very careful. Yet——

It was on the way home that night that Jack Morse confessed to himself that he was in love with Vivian Vane, madly, hopelessly in love.

XXXVIII

DURING all those years while Vivian Vane was steadily ascending the ladder of fame, Jim Driver was either standing still or going down, and, in the last year, struggling desperately to keep from hitting the bottom. Jim had been entirely adequate to the cataclysmic, explosive youth of the pictures, but as they developed in artistry, and crash-boxes gave way to "situation," the greatest of all the impresarios of "punch" was unequal to the change.

Jim's first blow came when the old Climax was swallowed by the Noted Players Company, and he was not taken over by the new organization. But James Driver was not through by a long shot. His name alone had value and could easily attract capital that was fairly itching to spend itself in the profitable enterprise of motion pictures. So Jim became the producer of the Driver Specials, with his own company, releasing through Eclipse.

But somehow the Driver Specials did not sell very well. They were costing a good deal to make because of the huge crowds required, and the material waste

in blowing up trains, steamboats, or at least a few automobiles; and besides, the fans were now developing insatiable appetites for what is known as "heart interest," and were even passing up "The Kidnapped Express" for the pleasure of witnessing "His Mother's Shame."

On top of it all, this "high-pressure" director was no business man; and after a few ever-diminishing years, The Driver Feature Specials ran on the rocks with a "punch" that shook down all the fellow's hard-earned savings.

Next, Jim signed a contract (giving him a fair salary) to make ten-episode serials for the Static Film Company. His first, called the "Buzzard's Claw, A Mystery of Millions," contained all the big punches that had made him famous, and so when he began to repeat his secret panels, torture chambers, and near-ravishments in the good old opium joint, even the Mexicans were utterly unthrilled.

Jim Driver was let out and hit the bottom on the same day that Vivian Vane became an independent star. Thus turned the celluloid wheel of fortune many times in those tremendous years of the cinema's first phenomenal growth.

As one of his associates put it at the time: "Jim is like the British army—it never knows when it is licked." Still believing himself the greatest director of the game, and that he had simply been euchred into a corner "by a lotta dubs who were jealous," he began

a systematic bombardment of the various New York studios, the final and almost crushing blow coming when many of the newer men who had now come into the game and were established in authority in the huge consolidations, did not even know who he was.

At the Filmart offices in Times Square, Driver at last found an official who knew him in the old days—that is back in the '09's and '10's—and he greeted the pioneer cordially. But when Jim launched forth to tell Joseph Zimball "jest what is wrong with the pitchers," and how they had "lost their punch," and suggested an opportunity to horn in at the Filmart, his old friend grew tight across the chest. "I'm sorry, Driver, but I'm afraid we can't get together. You see we are not going in much for your kind of pictures now——"

It was the same old turndown, and Jim half expected it. Lying back in his chair and fussing with his hat, he let Zimball finish his patter.

"Who is that?" he asked, by way of finishing an unpleasant dialogue, and pointing to a huge bromide enlargement of a young lady's head, hanging on the wall upon which he had been gazing during the whole interview.

"Why, you know who she is, Driver; that's Vivian Vane."

"Oh, I know that, but what's her real name?"

"That's it—she belongs to the old Vane family of Baltimore they say. Oh, yes, she's a very high-toned

little lady, Driver, and that's why she is at the top. Blood tells every time."

"You're sure of your story?"

"Oh, abso-dam-lutely. She came with the Brilig outfit when we bought 'em out, and one of the biggest considerations prompting the deal was that we got this young society comer with it. Why, who did you think she was, Driver?"

"Oh, I dunno," he replied. "She looks sumthin' like a kid I usta know."

As has been noted elsewhere in this story, even though Jim Driver was shy on dramatic construction and perhaps heart interest, he was very strong on character, and there was something in that face he had been studying during his fruitless interview that made him confident Vivian Vane was not the young lady's real name. "If that isn't Tessie Boggs, I'll eat my panama," he said to himself. So obsessed was he in his belief that he undertook a little sleuthing.

At the Pork and Beanery he inquired for the proprietor, and Dorgan came up, not much older, but somewhat mellower than when Driver first saw him on that notable night some six years ago.

"No, I haven't heard of the kid since she went over to you folks at The Climax. She never came back, but perhaps Pilky will know something about her. I'll call her in."

Kitty's flight among the stars had been short but flashy. Having been a purely artificial success, de-

pending upon the favor of the great Montaigne Belmont, now a chorus man with a road show working the Middle West, Kitty's descent was instantaneous and complete when she was caught with half the studio wardrobe packed away in her trunks.

Stalling around for a year or so at the other studios in small parts and bits, the quick-fading girl-weed began to coarsen to such a degree that she had difficulty finally in finding work as an extra. Then once after six weeks' "resting," the poor misplanted child of the slums gathered up her broken hopes (one could hardly call them ideals) and sought out the unkept garden in which she had grown up. Dorgan had taken her back gladly, for after all, Kitty was a good-natured soul and made lots of friends for the Beanery.

"Say, Kit, your old boss Driver wants to see you in Pop Dorgan's office," said Mamie Glutz to the soiled and faded creature presiding in the kitchen of the aromatic Beanery, and instantly the girl's pale, heavy face went red for the first time in years, and a light came to her eyes that almost brought back youth.

"He's come to take me back in the movies!" she thought, and she could hardly wait to powder her nose before hurrying off to meet her savior.

"No," she said sadly, when she learned Driver's real purpose, "no, I ain't seen Tessie since she left the studio. I did hear that she'd gone to Chicago, but I expect she's in Australia now. You know Tessie always wanted to travel. Chee, I sure would like to see

the kid, for I treated her doit when I was gettin' mine."

"Yes, there's a look of Tess there," she went on, contemplating a photograph Driver had handed her, "but that ain't Tess. The poor kid never had no map like that." In reality, Kitty received a decided shock from one of the pictures, so much was it like her old chum; but Driver had never been kind to Tessie, and so Kitty, fearing that she might make further trouble for her, carefully disguised her look of recognition.

Undiscouraged, Driver was still convinced of what he now called his hunch, and decided to play it through. Besides, Los Angeles had become the center of the motion picture industry, and he was sure to land on his feet out there.

XXXIX

GOSSIP in Movieland travels fast, and now that Jack Morse had become almost a daily visitor to the Filmart Studio, arriving there punctually at five o'clock, and leaving a few minutes later with Vivian, tongues were loosed in all directions.

"I hear Vane is horning in among the four hundred," grinned Miss Susie Sumptious to her director. "They say she's engaged to that society Johnnie; have you heard anything about it?"

"Only that Rex can't get her to work nights any more," replied the other. "But she says it's kleig eye.

You know, Susie, these blondes can't stand the lights," he added with a smile.

"I notice the lights of the Ship Café don't hurt her eyes any," came the sniffy reply.

Which wasn't quite fair, because Vivian and Jack had never been to the Ship Café but once, and on that night it happened that they met Susie and her party, who immediately got their heads together to give them both a right hearty little panning.

Even if her rivals didn't approve, the crew of the Filmart were very cordial to the pleasant rumor, especially the McGowans and the Todds, who, at Vivian's arrangement, met her suitor as often as possible.

Of all the days of the week, however, Sunday was the one day Vivian most looked forward to, for then she and Jack were together for hours at a time. He would arrive at her house shortly after noon, and they would start on horseback through the Santa Monica Mountains, riding until sunset, then returning to dinner, afterwards sitting out under the oaks "to watch the fairies" until ten o'clock.

Happy as she was on these glorious occasions, Vivian was not entirely satisfied with the progress of affairs, for she noted that there was a point in their frank intimacy beyond which Jack would never go, and his reserve puzzled her. Was he simply amused, or perhaps flattered to be first gentleman-in-waiting to the queen? Did he disapprove of her profession, or was he in doubt regarding the story of her early life? She

remembered the day he casually asked the name of the girls' school she attended and she wondered if he noticed her temporary confusion while gathering her quick wits together to frame the pretty lie. At least, to her great relief, he had not pursued his questions further, and she had managed to divert his interest. She would have given anything could she have told him the truth, but she dreaded the result of a confession. Furthermore, he had expressed such a strong belief in her being "born to good taste" that the revelation of her less than humble origin might be a terrible shock to a man with his aristocratic background. No, her secret was safe and she must keep it.

As to her own feelings, Vivian had not the slightest doubt. She was in love, and if Jack did not respond to her very transparent evidences of that fact, it was because his heart was elsewhere or he was confused with doubts.

Could it be Herbert Belden? She, of course, knew of the studio gossip that had coupled their names so often, but as Hollywood was always framing up romances for its stars, she had never paid enough attention to the rumor to deny it.

Then one Sunday night—it being too cold to sit outdoors—they were looking over a lot of old "stills" in her den, and Vivian, leaving the room for a few minutes to give orders to the servants, returned presently to see Jack hurriedly put back the picture of Jan that stood on her writing table. With splendid acting she

pretended not to notice it. Afterwards, wondering if he really was jealous of her romantic sentiments regarding that kid affair (as she called it to herself) she decided to remove the silver-framed reminder of it.

Unable to wait a whole week to see the effect the picture's removal would have upon Jack, she arranged a little party to come and preview her latest film at her house.

Naturally the invitation was eagerly accepted by the principals of the cast and the other stars whom she counted among her friends. Jack again met Marie Drummond, Vivian's greatest screen rival, and Donald Fairfax, whom he had liked from his first meeting at Mrs. Westlake's. There was something radiantly healthy and joyous about this ebullient favorite that fascinated the quieter Jack. Then there was Freddie Fenton, the world's greatest comedian who was a host in himself, and Jack was pleased to find that the little fellow had a rare intelligence and rarer charm.

Altogether the gathering was a unique experience, and Jack was delighted to see how wholesomely and simply these supposedly spoiled children of the screen took their pleasures.

With a four-piece "atmospheric orchestra" from the studio, the merry party of twenty sat in the half light of the big studio room and saw unrolled before them Vivian's latest triumph. It was a picture full of the sweetness and fun that had made Vivian famous, but the part that got the biggest hand was, of course, the

football game, and Jack found himself quite a hero when his doubling was explained. (Fortunately Herbert Belden had been loaned to the Prominent Players Company and was off on location in Santa Barbara.)

During the refreshments when the party broke up into little groups, Vivian managed to maneuver Jack into her den and there impishly watched him to see if he noticed the change.

Naturally, it was the first thing he did notice, also that a vase of his favorite flowers stood where once reposed his silver-framed counterfeit.

"Vivian," he said accusingly, "what have you done with your hero's picture? You told me you had burned love's candles before it for six long years."

"Yes, Jack, but they had burned very low, and I thought perhaps——"

"Light them again, Vivian. I loved your devotion to your dream."

"Yes, Jack, but——"

"For my sake—won't you?"

"Yes, of course. I'll do anything for your sake." (And she blushed that she had said it.) "But why——?"

"Because I'm going to help you find him." And as she opened the drawer where she had placed the picture face down, he took it out with faintly trembling hands and stood it again upon her writing table.

"May I keep the flowers here too?" she asked wistfully.

"Yes—please do."

If Vivian had been as elementally simple at that moment as she was six or seven years ago, she would have thrown her arms about Jack's neck and kissed him shamelessly, for that was her impulse. He loved her; she knew it now.

"I must go now," he said, and she noticed his agitation. "I'll not go back inside." Holding her hand for a long time, he seemed on the point of speaking what she knew was in his heart, but with a sudden gentle pressure he was gone.

XL

VIVIAN arose the next morning with a song on her lips. She was feeling an exhilaration she had not known for years.

"Hurry, Marie; we must be at the studio and all made up at half past eight."

"Made up at half past *eight?*"

"Yes, Marie, we begin shooting at nine." And Vivian sang:

> "In winter I get up by night
> And dress by yellow candle light——"

"Mam'selle is very happy this morning. The party must have liked the picture, n'est-ce pas?"

"Well, the party didn't *mind* the picture, nor the flowers beside it."

"*J'nais comprende pas,* Mam'selle."

"You don't need to comprehend, Mam'selle, just clap your hands, that's all. The picture was a success, especially when I removed it."

"Removed it? Mam'selle talk very queer this morning."

"Well, I feel queer, Marie. For instance you see Old Baldy off there all covered with snow. Well, I'll bet you, Marie, I can jump over it in two jumps. Didn't you ever feel that you could jump over a mountain, Marie?"

"Oui, Mam'selle, I felt like that only last week when my Georges say to me——"

"No, no, Marie. You mustn't tell me what Georges said, or I'll say you are talking 'queer' this morning."

"Well, Miss Vane, why the excitement?" asked Cyril Rex as he walked into the cottage in response to a call from his star and saw her all made up and on her toes to go to work.

"I feel fine this morning and I thought I'd like to do those banqueting scenes to-day, if we can."

"But the camera men are still trying out the lights on 'Katy,' and I'm afraid they won't be ready to shoot before nine-thirty."

"Well, wouldn't they like to try their experiments on the original, for once, rather than on a dummy with a blonde wig? Tell Charlie I'll be right over and I'll be very, very patient while he struggles with his old 'composition' and 'back lighting.'"

As Rex left her dressing room quite bewildered by her early morning enthusiasm, he heard her singing:

"'I love my love in the springtime,
And I love him in the fall,
And in the golden summer——'"

An office boy had entered. Vivian smilingly took the white slip of paper he handed her—and turned deathly pale. It read: Wm. Driver—to see Miss Vane.

"Ring for Mr. McGowan," she said breathlessly.

"Why, what has happened, Mam'selle?" asked the maid, alarmed at her mistress's nervousness.

"Never mind, Marie, just ring, and when Mr. McGowan comes in, leave us alone."

A moment later Vivian's manager entered, grinning happily. "Well, Vivian, what it is—is it?" he asked jovially.

"Mac, look at this," she replied, feebly handing him the slip. McGowan's face clouded, but only for a moment.

"Hold tight, little girl. It's all right. He won't get in. I'll attend to him."

"But, Mac!——"

"Don't you worry a minute. If he tries to pull any recognition stuff, we'll just laugh him to death. You're no more like the girl he knew than black is like white. Now cheer up, little one, and leave Driver to

your Uncle Mac." Smiling wanly and hopefully she watched him leave for the outer office.

"Well, Driver, how do you do? I haven't seen you in years. What are you doing on the Coast?" exploded McGowan as he greeted his old-time superior.

"Oh, I came out to direct on the Filmart lot, Mac," grinned Driver.

"Sent out by the New York office?" asked McGowan with surprise.

"No, but I thought for old times' sake, Miss Vane could fix it."

"Miss Vane? Old times' sake? Why, Miss Vane doesn't know you, Driver. That's why she sent me out."

"Does she send her *manager* out to greet every stranger who asks for her?" and Driver winked one eye very slowly.

"Of course not." McGowan had to hurry to outthink the wise old bird before him. "But when I saw your name, I thought I'd come out and give you the friendly up-and-down."

"Say now, Mac, quit your kiddin'. I've come back to see Tessie Boggs."

"Tessie Boggs! Ho, ho, ho, where do you get that stuff? Do you think Vivian Vane is Tessie Boggs?"

"I sure do, Mac."

"Well, well, well. This *is* a joke. Say, you've seen Tessie Boggs since I have, and that's six or seven years ago. Driver, you're not well," and he smilingly

tapped the ex-director's "bean." "You ought to tell some of Vivian Vane's swell relations what you've just told me."

"But, can't I see her?"

"I'm sorry, Driver, but Miss Vane simply can't see anybody—especially about business. These big stars are pestered to death. Why, last week I had to turn down the Secretary of the Navy because she was too fed up on distinguished visitors to do her work. Los Angeles is one of the focal points of the world's tourists, and every darned one wants to horn into Movieland. I wonder what the cabinet would say if we asked permission to see them working politics around their mahogany? No, we've got to protect our pets from visitors or we'd never get any work done. Times have changed, Driver, since the old Climax days. The only people who ever bothered us then were the police looking for ex-burglars that you had hired to crack safes in your grand old westerns." And McGowan laughed.

"You forget the Juvenile Officers who were after one star, Mac." Driver watched McGowan's face narrowly, but seeing no reaction to this insinuation he went on. "Well, what's the chance, Mac, of landing a job? You know that I've put over some of the greatest money-makers in the business."

"I'm sorry, Driver, but we're overrun with applicants now. There's all sorts of ability standing on the side-lines these days trying to cut in on the pictures.

It's the big money calls 'em. But there isn't a chance, Driver. I tell you that frankly," and McGowan walked toward the door.

"Well, I'll nick in somewhere. You'll hear from me yet," replied the great director of yester-year.

"I hope so, Driver. I wish you all the luck in the world. Good-by."

When McGowan hurried back to his charge he found her nervously pacing up and down the room.

"It's all right, Vivian. He pulled his bluff, but I pulled his cork, and he's gone off convinced of his mistake."

"Oh, Mac," she said. "I'm so frightened."

"Nonsense, Vivian. Forget it," he replied and as she snuggled up into his protecting arms he patted her reassuringly.

"Anyway, if it came to a showdown, we could admit it all now. You've reached the point in your career where the truth would be lots more romantic than that old publicity story. Those 'rumors' were more fashionable then than they are now."

"No, no, no, Mac. We mustn't," she protested vehemently.

"Why, Vivian?"

"Oh, because—because—I couldn't. We mustn't. I—I—I——"

"Oh, well, don't worry, Vivian. We won't have to," and McGowan kissed her on the forehead.

"Miss Vane isn't going to work to-day?" exploded

Cyril Rex, when Marie had brought him the news. "Well, these stars certainly do develop temperament. Only fifteen minutes ago she was turning flip-flops, and now—! Oh, well—if she can afford to lose a couple of thousand dollars, I guess we can stand it."

XLI

THE next day McGowan received a telephone call from Driver in which the pioneer director asked for a letter of recommendation, as he had an opportunity to go to San Francisco with a new company being formed up there, and so glad was McGowan to get Vivian's nemesis out of town that he wrote a letter of extravagant praise for the great "punch" artist. Two days later he received a telegram from San Francisco which read:

LANDED BIG THIS IS A REAL TOWN. THANKS DRIVER.

Notwithstanding this encouraging news Vivian was so upset that she worked with the greatest difficulty and would have laid off and taken a trip to Catalina if she had not been scheduled for some big scenes requiring great crowds that week.

With her work occupying her mind by day, and being in Jack's company almost every evening, Vivian somehow managed to shake off many of her fears, though Jack had noted a nervous, high-strung tension about her that was expressed in a craving for excitement.

He thought it due to the fact that she was in the crisis of her picture.

It was the nights, however, that Vivian dreaded, and the first one after Driver's sudden appearance she tossed about until almost dawn. During those restless hours, the whole tragedy of her youth came back to her. She recalled her miserable childhood after her mother's death, when she lived with her uncle in the back of that smelly saloon (no wonder she could never stand the taste of liquor); then the sweat and noise of the hat factory where she met Kitty; and finally, her life at the Beanery (comparatively happy with a few bright spots of color). Then came Kitty's theft followed by the Juvenile Court experience which had so frightened her. Then Jan! and her momentary happiness. Next, her rocket-like flight into Movieland, only to come down like a stick, leaving the Climax Studio with the stigma of a common thief attached to her name. It was true she was out of the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court and could not be apprehended for delinquency, but she could still be arrested for theft and taken back. Such crimes were not outlawed by time.

That was her story, so carefully buried deep in the years. And then, after it had become but the vague memory of an unpleasant dream, and she had reached success, with her greatest happiness just around the corner, came this miserable creature out of her past threatening her beautiful house of cards.

McGowan, noticing her mental depression and having apparently failed to reassure her as to her safety, urged her "to lay off and take a rest," but work was what she wanted, especially the strenuous work of her current production.

"The Girl of the Crusades" was a highly dramatic story of the middle ages, wherein Vivian appeared as a young 'boy' in bright armor, leading his hosts against the forces of Islam in the splendid quest of the Holy Grail. This great feature picture was now in its sixth week, with the big battle scenes to be made on Wednesday and Thursday.

"Uncle Bill has wired me to come to New York at once, Vivian," Jack had said to her on Monday, "but I'm going to risk staying over until you shoot that moat and castle stuff, for from what I saw the other day, I'm scared to death to have you mixed up with all those spears and horses, and I want to be near you."

"Please stay," was all she said, and Jack noted a frightened look in her eyes that he interpreted as dread of accident.

Stay? All the uncles in the world couldn't have dragged him away from those pleading eyes.

On Wednesday morning the whole Filmart plant was permeated by a repressed and expectant excitement. The big castle set, built at huge expense, stood at the north end of the lot, its turrets and minarets reflected in the muddy and slimy waters of the moat which had been dug around it.

Hither and thither in all directions one saw the white turbans and flying robes of the Saracens making ready to defend the castle, while yet mixing in fraternal friendship with the bright-armored hosts of the King of France, who were soon to give them battle.

By nine o'clock the camera men on high stands were tuning up their machines. Cyril Rex was giving final instructions to the dare-devils who were to do the rough close-up fighting and the falls into the moat. Temporarily every other company on the lot suspended operations so that the directors could assist in handling the mob.

The appearance of Vivian in bright armor, riding a white horse and carrying the Crusaders' flag, was the signal for an outburst of applause even from the "Saracens," for Vivian Vane had a popularity among extra-men enjoyed by very few stars. They had seen her nerve in many instances and had noted her interest in their comfort.

Sitting there surveying the pageant, Vivian could not help but compare the system and management of the present day productions with the old rough-and-ready methods of the Climax. In those far-off days Driver never knew until he got his crowd together just what he was going to shoot, nor when to stop. He just went out and got so much footage of "battle stuff" and then cut it in where he thought it would fit.

Here, however, every detail had been thought out

in advance and complete military maps made of every contemplated movement, so that at this moment the forces were disposed in their proper places awaiting only the signal to advance, with assistant directors watching every unit to see that they got off on time and in proper formation. Cyril Rex, like a commanding general for both sides, stood on a high stand, megaphone at hand, with telephone operators behind him, ready to communicate with all parts of the field. Over in the corner of the lot a fire company stood ready, and down on Stage II a temporary hospital had been set up with five physicians in attendance—two from the insurance companies and three from the studio. Vivian realized the danger that lay ahead; yet she had steadfastly refused to be doubled in her part.

At last, amid almost breathless silence, Rex gave the signal for the advance. Suddenly, a big military band concealed from view behind a wall, burst forth into the stirring measures of the Marseillaise, and then slowly through a cloud of dust, (stirred up by men on the side for the purpose of camouflaging the distant sky line) those standing by the director's post saw a big white, full panoplied horse emerge, carrying the diminutive figure of Vivian, her silver armor dully (for camera reasons) reflecting the sun, her helmet plume waving, and holding aloft a great white flag with the red Maltese-cross of Christ showing as an oriflamme to the armored hosts behind her.

On they came, a thrilling sight with their lances held like so many exclamation points above them, and the dust so faintly enveloping the farthest ranks that one got the impression of infinite numbers reaching into the illimitable perspective.

The high cameras were now getting the long shots, while others stationed along the line were "grabbing off semiclose-ups," which could be used to "cut to" when the long shots needed breaking.

Deploying before the castle, the young leader rode her prancing, nervous steed (unused to the noise and texture of the heavy armor) back and forth along the line, giving instructions to her aids and urging valor upon her Knights.

Dismounting from their horses, the attacking soldiers brought up ladders, battering rams, and catapults and the assault began.

For over three hours, with many retakes and intermittent rests, the battle was fought, until the Crusaders managed to get their ladders across the moat and up the side of the castle's walls. Standing waist-deep in the mud and water of the moat, Vivian called her orders and encouraged the "dare-devils," who for "ten dollars a fall," were climbing to the top of the wall and then allowing themselves to be pushed or poked off into the black muck below. That Vivian was not struck by the falling ladders, spears, and shields—to say nothing of the men who came plunging down around her—was little short of a miracle; yet she was

spared the slightest injury and managed to keep her banner floating throughout the tumult.

Even on the rare occasions when the studio risks a valuable star in dangerous work she must be rested and treated much more tenderly than people who are paid just to take their bumps. But this was not the case with Vivian Vane, for though small, she was wiry, and in perfect health, and like many a fragile appearing person she had great constitutional strength. During the second hour of the battle, Rex called through his megaphone: "Miss Vane, wouldn't you like to get into some dry clothes and rest for a while?"

"Oh, I guess I can stand it if these boys can," she called back. "Let's finish." Was it any wonder that every extra-man in Movieland would have committed murder for this little star?

At last came the final scene, shot at two-thirty, without even a pause for luncheon.

The Crusaders had now managed to gain a foothold on the castle walls and were able to let down the drawbridge. In a moment, Vivian, covered with mud from head to foot, had been helped aboard her horse and started forward to lead her knights to the final attack within the castle walls.

It was a scene of magnificent chaos, with missiles flying from the walls above, and an occasional daredevil (earning another welcome ten!) being pitched headlong or sprawling into the mud, hand-to-hand

conflicts at the gate, and the mounted knights pressing up from behind.

Suddenly the little figure on the white horse turned and, raising her standard with one hand and her sword with the other, called upon her army to follow her across the bridge to Victory. At the same moment the military band crashed forth in a stirring battle march, the fighters letting out blood-curdling yells. Even the crews and spectators were awed. It was the supreme moment!

And then—"Look! look!" cried the crowd. For Vivian's horse, colliding with the defenders, was seen to rear up on his hind legs, and before anyone realized what was happening, fell backward into the moat, carrying his rider with him—and underneath!

A great awed silence—punctuated by the distant yells of those who had not witnessed the accident! Then confusion and excitement, with Rex shouting unheard instructions from his conning tower. Several of the fighting knights, burdened with their heavy armor, laboriously jumped in. Medical internes, disguised in costume, rushed from the nearest observation posts, and from the crowd of spectators dashed a fellow unencumbered by even a coat and hat. Though farthest away he reached the spot first and instantly disappeared beneath the muddy and troubled waters.

For what seemed ages to the onlookers only the feet of the plunging horse rose above the surface, but as a

rough-riding dare-devil managed to get the horse's head out of the water and raise him up, the head and shoulders of the "spectator" appeared, and as he staggered out, it was seen that he was holding the armored girl in his arms.

Assisted by willing hands Vivian was carried—while her rescuer was helped—to the hospital on Stage II, whose cots were by now nearly all occupied by the casualties of the day. Curiously enough, the first emergency work was not for the doctors, but for the property man, and Hank Todd was instantly on the spot attending Vivian's metallic disarmament—no easy task and one in which feminine modesty had to give way to necessity. But driving the man away, Hank, helped by an "arm and hammer" nurse, soon had Vivian under warm covers.

"She's O.K., Doc," he announced proudly. "She opened her eyes as soon as her visor was lifted and said: 'I'm all right. I held my breath'."

Seeing the strange faces of the attendants hovering over her, Vivian closed her eyes in horror; nor did she open them again while she was being washed (and bathed beneath the blanket) by the efficient Marie and the nurses, though she kept assuring them she was all right.

When finally warmed by hot-water bags and attended by Marie, she found herself lying comfortably on a cot in her cottage, she slowly opened her eyes and peeped up into the mud-smeared face of Jack Morse,

who had, in his anxiety for her welfare, refused all attention for himself.

"Oh, Jack," she cried, "was it you?" And ignoring his soiled condition she threw her arms about his neck.

"Oh," she said, tightening her hold, "did you see his eyes? He was beside me in the water. Don't let him look at me."

"It's all right, Vivian dear, nobody is looking at you. You are nervous," he answered, holding her close.

"Oh, Jack, I'm so glad you didn't go. I'm so glad you are here. Those awful eyes! They have been watching me for three days. Everywhere I went I saw them!"

"You're upset, dear, don't worry," and Jack lowered her weary head on the pillow.

"I'm sorry, Marie, to have dirtied up your nice clean bedding. I'll go and wash up now, but Miss Vane must be watched carefully. The shock has been more serious than bodily injury."

Beckoning him from above Vivian's head, Marie called Jack to one side. "M'sieur Jack, Mam'selle has complained before to-day of an extra-man who, she says, has been following and watching her."

"What does she mean?" asked the boy with a puzzled frown clouding his brow."

"He's a large man in armor, with a black beard," she whispered.

"What is the casting director's name, Marie?" he asked, breathlessly.

"Gersted, sir."

"Thank you, Marie. I'll be back in a little while."

XLII

THERE is this to be said about Driver: he never went off half-cocked. Did he run right out to the Filmart lot the day he arrived in Los Angeles? He did not. On the contrary he located himself comfortably in an actors' boarding house in Hollywood and then set out for a week or so to "get an eyeful" of Movieland, and he was surprised to note the difference between the old rough-and-tumble studios of his Climax days and the great modern plants that had grown up in the capitol of Filmdom. Instead of the ramshackle "dumps" that had at first disfigured the scenery in both the East and West, he found six or eight big producing companies in Southern California that had erected magnificent buildings of splendid architecture and substantial structure—show-places on the itinerary of every sightseer. Here was one, built in imitation of Mt. Vernon, suggesting the gentle ease and comfort of that famous homestead on the Potomac. Not far away there loomed up the long classic façade of a Greek Parthenon dedicated as a Temple of the Cinema; farther up on the street was a charming row of old-English cottages, the studio offices of the greatest comedian. The Filmart, having adopted the native architecture, looked less like a moving picture

studio than any of the others—its red-tiled roofs and high adobe walls suggesting an old mission with its cloisters and arcades.

Driver learned that stability and dignity had come not only to the physical plants, but the intricate business organization was no less notable. No longer were directors petty czars who could fill up the ranks with their friends—and especially their lady friends.

"Oh, no, Jim," said one old chap who had been playing "butlers" for years. "There ain't no pull any more. Even Cyril Rex couldn't hire me without gettin' by the casting director, and believe me, Bo, them are the hard-boiled guys. Married men, mostly, an' vamp proof. They've got our numbers an' know just what we can do, an' that's all there is to it. This actin' game is now a matter of types and ability and is as serious as any other business. The only chance for an outsider is to nick in on the crowd stuff. Even then they've got to wait until all the regular extras are taken."

Driver had already been made aware of the barriers hedged about the stars, but—Oh, well then he'd have to use his wits, and Jim's wits, with the working of plot, thickened and deepened.

If Jim Driver was suspicious, "Persistence" was his middle name. "They won't let me see her, eh? Well, there is more than one way to skin a skunk," he said to himself in chaste metaphor, the morning he

left McGowan. He immediately set out for his lodging house whose proprietor had the shooting schedule for every studio in town.

Looking down the list of some forty companies, Jim came to the V's. "'Vane! Here it is. Company—Vane; Studio—Filmart; Star—Vivian Vane; Director—Rex; Casting—Gersted; Week—6th; Character of story—Costume; Name—A Girl of the Crusades; Needs of week—crowds, men.'"

"So Miss Vane needs crowds this week, eh?" mused Driver after laying down the studio schedule. "And it is costume stuff. Well, that suits me all right. I'll have to give the little lady a hand."

Then in order to divert suspicion he telephoned McGowan for his letter of recommendation and had a friend who was going to San Francisco send the telegram that told of his arrival and success in that "live town."

Knowing the ropes as well as he did, it was not difficult to be taken into the studio on Monday along with some three hundred others, and as soon as he got his ticket he beat it right for the men's wardrobe where he receipted for his costume. He wished to conceal his identity as soon as possible.

In the huge loft where the great army of disappointed Warfields gathered to be fitted to their costumes, Driver noticed a guild fellowship that was novel to him. Evidently Los Angeles was training a definite group of craftsmen who had made "pictures"

their business, for he could tell by their banter they were old friends.

"Lo, Dunk, where were you workin' last week?"

"Soup and fish at the Mammoth—where you?"

"Oh, I was hair-pants'n it back o' 57." (Which being translated meant that the gentleman was working in a western story—where they wear hair pants—on a location back of a hill upon whose bosom a distant pickle king had plastered a huge "57.")

"Say, Hawkeye, have you seen the layout?" shouted one square-jawed chap to a fellow "dare-devil." "I'm willin' to flop from a horse as often as they want, for ten a fall, but we've got to bump off a wall forty feet high into a mud puddle, and wearin' these dam tin pants at that. And Keating says jumpin' won't go, we gotta flop."

"In that case," replied Hawkeye, the eugenic marvel whose immediate progenitors were Indian, Chinese, Negro, and Mexican, "I think we ought to hold 'em up for twenty. I think my life is worth at least that. Where's Keating?"

"Say, wherja get that twenty dollar stuff?" snapped the assistant director when Hawkeye protested the rate on forty-foot falls. "Hayes is goin' to do a jump from an aeroplane to a freight goin' fifty miles an hour for twenty-*five*. Say, you fellas give me a pain in the lap."

"Nothin' doin', Buck," reported the humbled dare-devil, after the short interview.

"All right, old scout," grinned Buck. "We'll wait till jest before they're goin' to shoot and they'll give us twenty all right, rather'n hold up production."

Driver recalled how in his day there was a decided preference for the Union Army over the Confederate, or the American uniform in preference to the English, but evidently Art had at last triumphed over provincialism, for in this undressed crowd of Latins, Celts, and Anglo-Saxons, by far the greater number preferred the Crescent to the Cross. This strange choice of Islam over Christianity, however, had no religious significance, but was entirely due to the fact that the Mohammedans wore comfortable, cool, flowing robes that fit easily over their "balbriggans," while the Crusaders were encased in "tin pants." In fact, so strong was the Saracenistic preference for "shawls" that an additional dollar was offered all who would don the hardware clothes.

Believing he could hide better in metal than muslin, Jim chose to fight with the Christians, and after securing the largest chest and leg measurements to be had, repaired to the dressing rooms. When finally he stood up in full baronial armor with his sword and shield and plumed casque, he made a magnificent crusader. Even with the vizor turned up, no one would ever have recognized the bronze-bearded face as belonging to Jim Driver, unless the somewhat sinister eyes should have betrayed the identity of the ex-director.

Thus it came about when Vivian Vane, as the Girl

of the Crusades, stormed the citadel of the Saracen chief, one of her sturdiest knights was the man who held her destiny in his hands. Indeed, so loyal was the big crusader that he managed to stay by her side throughout the day, and when, in that tragic moment of the battle, the young girl was pitched with her horse into the turbid waters of the moat, it was Driver who was first to follow. (Driver was no coward; neither did he wish anything to happen to his meal ticket.) When at last the "spectator" splashed in and fished the weighted girl from beneath the plunging horse and brought her to the surface, Driver's eyes were the first she looked into. Whether it was fright or recognition he could not tell, but despite the mud he saw a look of pain come into her face at that instant.

Altogether his first day was not productive of great results; his opportunities for observation were too limited. But there were other days. On the morrow he shifted his allegiance to the Star and Crescent, and with bol-armenia and crêpe-hair lost his identity in an Othelloesque son of the desert.

For the next four days, while innumerable small shots and semiclose-ups were being made, Driver had a chance to nose about in comparative ease, making personal observations and listening to the studio gossip.

Among other things, he learned of the "reported engagement" of Vivian to Mr. John B. Morse, nephew of "Bill" Morse, of the New York Stock Exchange.

"Well," thought Driver, "little Tessie is aiming

high. A nephew of Bill Morse! Well, that's goin' some. But she's got the coin, so why shouldn't she grab off a swell? I'll bet she'd give a lot not to let her little Johnnie know what I know. It seems to me that I've heard somewhere that knowledge is power."

Another bit of gossip that reached him was in regard to the star's leading man. Herbert Conningsby Belden, he learned, came from a "high-up" family in the East and had landed in the pictures because he looked and acted like "one of them Sparrow Collar gents." He, too, was attentive to Miss Vane, but the gossips insisted he was just using her to help his own rise to stardom. "Perhaps," thought Driver, "I can help the boy."

Jim's personal observations, however, were not particularly encouraging. Though there were certain things about Vivian's face that were unmistakably like Tessie's, yet in others a marked dissimilarity was apparent. Her complexion and hair were vastly different and vastly better. Also this patrician young thing carried her head high and walked with the grace and dignity of a princess, rather than the swagger of a Bowery girl.

His doubts increased when he heard her talk. Hedged about as she was with the principals and other high functionaries, he had been compelled to make his observations from afar, but on Wednesday he was fortunately selected with four others to work in a tent

set in which Vivian and the Saracen chief were having a scene.

During a certain very dramatic shot in which tension was achieved through close-up expressions, Vivian ordered the scene cut.

"Mr. Rex," she said, "let's just rest a minute until we settle this point." Asking Marie to remove her hot metallic casque, which revealed her long blonde hair, Vivian went on:

"Now, Mr. Rex, I don't wish to be stubborn or too emphatic, but it seems to me that Herbert's purposes" (Belden was playing the part of the Saracen chief) "are motivated more by religious fanaticism than by sensual desire—at least, that is my interpretation. Otherwise, the whole psychology of the plot would have to be changed."

That was all Driver heard, but it was enough to convince him of his blunder. "No, no, this is not Tessie Boggs. That poor little dub could never have talked highbrow stuff like this. Jim, I'm afraid you're a damn fool."

The story might have ended at this point had it not been for Jim Driver's "middle name." Disarmed, but still persistent, he was out for one more good look before checking in his costume that evening and giving up his search, when the chance came.

Vivian had been working in the hot sun on the lot and had gone over to Stage III (which, for a wonder, was quiet this day) for a little rest in an improvised

dressing room, while Rex shot some inconsequential scenes down near the moat.

Hiding behind some "flats" that stood up screenwise in a corner, Driver observed Marie remove Vivian's casque, and the young lady lay languidly on a couch while her maid fussed about making her comfortable.

"Nobody can see me here, Marie," said Vivian with a smile.

"Oui, Mam'selle," replied the maid, knowing what was meant, and reaching into the drawer of the make-up table, she handed her little mistress two pieces of chewing gum. "Oh! you Americans are so droll," she said. "Always it is the gum." And she laughed maternally.

Driver, following at a distance, had watched Vivian go to her refuge, and after she and the maid were safely hidden, he had snooped around through the back and, finding a crack between two of the "flats," had peeked in.

Studying the girl's face at leisurely close range, he began to feel more than ever convinced he had blundered. But when she tore the wrapper from the gum, his eyes widened. He remembered now that he had never seen Tessie's face in repose, she had *always* been chewing gum, and as the recumbent girl began to move her jaws in the familiar rhythm, a fugitive little expression developed around the mouth and chin that sent a warm glow all through Jim's body. "Now, I

have it," he said to himself. "Nobody but Tessie ever had that little cross twist to her chewin'."

"Say, what the hell d'you mean nosin' 'round here?" The voice behind the snooping Saracen was that of Hank Todd, property man of the Vane Company, and personal protector of the famous star. "Say, don't you know that stuff don't go on this lot? What's your ticket?" Glancing at the name, Joe Sprague, the queen's champion handed the card back saying, "Now, get the hell outa here and don't never come on this lot again."

As Driver disappeared into the jungle of sets back of the glass stage, Vivian came trembling from behind the flats.

"Hank, who is that man? He's been watching me all this week. I heard you speaking to him, and when I peeked out I saw those same terrible eyes. Go and find out who he is."

But when Todd flew off to execute his queen's command, his prey had disappeared into the human omelet of crusaders, cowboys, Saracens, and "soup-and-fishermen" that swarmed over the lot in all directions.

XLIII

AFTER two small and short scenes on the dark stage, Vivian told Cyril Rex she was too fatigued to work any more that day, and, accompanied by her maid, labored limply to her cottage.

"Marie," she said as she threw herself on the divan, "make me a cup of tea before I dress. I'm too tired to move."

"Oui, Mam'selle. You lie there still like the mouse. I'll have it toute suite."

The maid had scarcely left the room, however, when the outer door opened and Vivian looked up into the smiling face of a hooded Moor.

"Why—why—haven't you made a mistake?" she asked, shaking with fear, for she saw again those sinister eyes.

But no reply came from the figure. Instead, with a sardonic smile he slowly turned around, and then with a few rapid gestures toward his face to remove his beard, he threw back the hood, and whirling about again stood confronting her.

"Jim Driver!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, Tessie—I mean Miss Vane. Your old friend, Jim Driver."

"But why," she gasped, "did you come this way?"

"Because, little one, if I had come any other way you would deny knowing me—and perhaps get away with it, for I wasn't sure of you myself. So I thought I'd try the good old police hokum of surprise. You see it worked."

"Well—what do you want?"

"I want a job directing you."

"Directing me!"

"Yes, kiddo—you. Now, listen here. You don't

want to get too up-stage with me, Tessie. I'm a charter member of the Knew-you-when Club and I know how you're trying to chloroform your past and all that. An' I ain't here to spill on you, if you'll be half way square.

"Remember this, Tessie: It was me who started you in pitchers—don't ferget that. I give you your first chance, and now you've landed, I think it's up to you to show some gratitude."

"For the yacht ride?" she fought back.

"Aw, ferget that stuff, Tessie. I didn't pull nothin' rough on you. I give you your start and I think you should wanta give *me* a hand now that I'm down on my luck. If I could jest direct you in one or two pitchers, I'd be made, and could go out and draw down the big money. What say?"

"Jim, you simply couldn't do it. Directing isn't what it used to be, and besides, the management wouldn't stand for it."

"Well, I'll tell you, Tess," (she could have killed him for his cheap familiarity) "I'm willin' to play square. If you will let me work as an *assistant* to Rex for one pitcher, then I'll learn all there is and on the next——"

"Suppose I should refuse?"

"You won't, kiddo, when you think it over." He looked at her meaningly. "I'm sure Mr. Morse would be better pleased if you didn't."

"If you mean the Juvenile Court thing, Jim, I've

been advised that it was outlawed when I became of age."

"But there's another charge standin' against you, that'd land you behind bars. The warrant is still out for you. I guess you've forgotten that, but the police haven't."

"But, I didn't steal that coat!" she exclaimed as she rose to her feet.

"Didn't you? Well, you'd have a fine time proving it with the evidence against you, and your witnesses—if you have any—scattered everywhere."

"All right, Jim, I'll see what I can do. I'll let you know to-morrow."

As he left the room, she sank down on the couch and stared blankly at the door before her.

XLIV

IT was amazing with what ease Jack Morse was able to stall off his Uncle Bill when Vivian's mood demanded his attention in Los Angeles. So disturbed was the lovesick boy over her continued nervousness that he found "serious business reasons" why he had to stay on six weeks beyond his intended departure.

In those six weeks, Vivian lived six years, so many things were crowded into her life.

Three days after her interview with her first director, Driver found himself installed as second assistant to

Rex in the Vivian Vane Company. When McGowan, as manager, had protested both against the fellow's employment and the manner of its seeking, Vivian, not wishing to give *all* her reasons, had gently insisted upon it.

"He can't do any harm, Mac, in such a position, and it will keep his mouth closed. Besides, it will give me time to think my way out."

The title of assistant director means two things. The holder may be a sub-director, attending to detail and shooting many of the lesser shots, such as entrances and exits, or perhaps a bit of action far from town. Such men are in line for directorships. Or he may be merely the director's assistant who fetches and carries like an office boy.

Upon these definitions Rex and Driver clashed. Rex would not permit Driver to cut in on his directing and Driver refused to fetch and carry. With the result that Jim had it very easy while drawing down a hundred dollars a week salary.

Driver's forceful character soon began to make itself felt, however, especially among some of the old timers who remembered him in the "good old days." To these worshippers, Jim would hold forth expansively, panning the new methods and making hilarious fun of his immediate superior. "There's lots of horses little Cyril's never rode," he would say in reference to Rex's breeches and puttees, which were in truth guiltless of the slightest equestrianism.

Living gloriously in the past, Driver occupied his enforced leisure in recounting his splendid exploits of burned bridges and lost express trains. He was disgusted that the castle of the Saracens was left standing after the "big battle"—nothing was big to him that wasn't followed by utter destruction.

But if Vivian thought Jim could be harmless in his humble position, she had underestimated his powers. No sooner had he gotten his bearings than he began to plot splendidly.

"Belden," he said one day to the handsome leading man, who had been given little to do in the Crusade story, "you ain't gettin' a fair deal here a-tall. Why ain't you a'starrin', I'd like to know? Lord, I'd like nothin' better'n to put you over in a big special."

Not wishing to overplay his hand, Driver let this idea soak into the rather light head of Herbert Conningsby; and so delighted was the fellow that he began to develop an amazing admiration for the abilities of the assistant director.

"I tell you, Belden, I've been half promised a chance to direct Miss Vane in her next pitcher, but there's so damn much jealousy in this here business I expect a lotta opposition. But if the deal goes through and my name goes on the 24-sheets as havin' directed Vivian Vane, I can get a million dollars to back me as an independent. I've got a great story in mind for you now that I believe we could get for ten or fifteen thousand. Yes, there's big money in you, Belden, and

you're a boob not to go after it. But first of all, I've gotta get that Vane contract, so if she says enthin' to you about me, make it strong."

"Watch me," was the satisfactory reply.

Driver's employment at the Filmart was coincidental with the final scenes of the "Crusade," and so during the next few weeks, while they were cutting and titling, making a few retakes, and preparing for the next picture, Vivian kept away from the studio as much as she could, going on short trips to Santa Barbara, Catalina, and Coronado—just far enough away, in fact, so that Jack could spend the week-ends with her.

Though the boy was thrilled with the love she so frankly gave him, and which he gave back with all the force of his strong nature, he knew that she was not wholly happy, and in spite of her efforts to abandon herself to the intoxication of their delicious "two-ings" he was aware that she was obsessed with an unspoken dread. Many times he had noticed a furtive look in her eyes, always accompanied by a tightening of her hand on his arm, as though seeking protection from some unseen power.

"What is it, Vivian? Aren't you happy in your work?" he asked one day as they sat on the rocks at LaJolla watching the surf break into the caves.

"No, Jack, I'm not," she replied with a candor that startled him. "I mean that now that I have you,

nothing matters, and I'd like to go way, way off to the end of the world, where we could be alone."

"But my precious little girl, I should hate to think I'd killed all your desire to express yourself. You've always loved your work, and you've added so much to beauty and happiness in a drab world that——"

"Yes, yes, I know, Jack. I *really* do love my work. I guess I'm just tired."

When Jack returned to the city on Monday, he decided to see for himself what was going on at the studio that was haunting those beautiful blue eyes of the girl he loved, and it was but a few days before he learned enough to stir him to decision.

"Hank," he said to Vivian's devoted soldier, as they lunched together at the "Ham-and" lunch room across the street, "do you know anything that's going on at the studio here to worry Miss Vivian?"

The property man, loyal to his mistress, and not knowing how much she had told the young man, thought very carefully before he spoke.

"Well, I think she is a bit worried because Driver is slated to direct her next picture."

"Driver? Who's Driver?" It was Jack's turn to be careful, but his acting of innocence was perfect.

"Oh, he's an old time director, but he's not much good, I guess."

"Then why does Miss Vivian employ him?"

"Well, you know, Mr. Jack, there's always some

fella like that on every lot. I only know what the gang says when anybody asks how they hold their job, 'Oh, don't you know?' they say with a grin, 'He knows where the body's buried.' "

"Do you mean to say he's got anything on Miss Vivian?" he asked with surprise.

"Nobody's got anything on her, Mr. Jack. Her life's an open book. She came here right from a swell school in New York—and her family are all fine folks. No, I'm afraid it's on some of the higher-ups."

"Mac?"

"Well, I'm not prepared to say, but I sure wish we could unload the pup, if he's worrin' Miss Vivian—For a nickle, *I'll* bet nobody would ever find out where *he's* buried."

"Oh, well, perhaps we can get rid of him without violence, Hank," and a smiling look of determination spread over the gentle features of young Morse.

"It's the only thing he understands," was the quiet but suggestive rejoinder.

XLV

CALLED to the telephone the next morning, Vivian was surprised to hear Jack's voice over "long distance."

"Hope I didn't wake you up, my dear, but I've had a sudden call to New York and I'm leaving by the

noon train. I'm sorry I won't have time to run down and——"

"But Jack, *dear*, how long——?"

"I'll be back here in two weeks. I won't stay in New York more than two or three days. I'm going down on a little dragon hunt, and if you are a real good little queen and don't worry about the imps that are frightening you, I'll promise to bring you back the dragon's skin."

"No, all I want is you, Jack, so come back to me just as soon as you can. . . ."

The studio now became a place of dread and horror to Vivian, and so she decided to stay right on with Bess McGowan at Coronado until Jack came back. Bathing in the surf, visiting the battleships by day and dancing with attentive young officers at the hotel in the evenings, she filled her hours with every diversion.

But the moment she let down, her artificial vivacity vanished, and the old nightmare seized her. Lying on the sand one day, Bess saw that she was suffering some unspoken trouble.

"Vivian," she said, looking down into her pensive face, "are you worried for fear Driver may tell Jack of your early life?"

"Yes—that, and other things."

"What other things? The Juvenile Court affair?"

"That's one of them."

"Vivian," began Bess slowly, as though she were

about to mention something under long and thoughtful contemplation, "why don't you make a clean breast of the whole thing? There is nothing in that Juvenile Court stuff, and if Jack is the man I think he is, he will honor you for your triumph over your poor start in life."

"Yes, I know; but it is a messy story, and my innocence would be hard to prove; there's the record."

"Besides, Bess," she went on, looking straight ahead, "something else happened after you and Mac left that —well, Driver holds me in the hollow of his hand. He can ruin my career like that!" And she crushed Jack's daily telegram as though it were an egg shell.

"Why, Vivian, what in Heaven's name do you mean?" exclaimed poor old Bess, who began to see the seriousness of the situation.

"Just this—but you must promise me, Bess, that you'll do nothing about it without my consent—I am a so-called fugitive from justice; and if Driver said the word, I could be *arrested* and dragged back to New York and sent to jail. I was perfectly innocent, but the circumstances were all against me. No, I can't let Jack know all this muck. And think of the publicity! The papers would love it. It would humiliate me to have to *prove* my innocence; yet any man would demand proof in the face of such a pyramid of facts. No, I'll pay Driver anything to shut him up until—until I can see my way out."

Bess, of course, was all for telling her efficient

spouse the whole wretched tale and letting him go down to New York and clear Vivian's name of every bit of suspicion if it took a fortune; but Vivian would not hear of it. "Why stir up the mess, when nobody knows about it? After all, Driver's price isn't so exorbitant that it can't be paid. I could pretty nearly direct myself now, and I could at least keep him from spoiling just one picture. No, Bess, leave it to me. I'll see a way out."

Two young girls of perhaps sixteen passed down the beach and saw a plump, handsome woman of forty sitting beneath a great red and orange parasol, and lying stretched out before her on the sand was a slight young girl, clad in a light blue silk sweater, white skirt, stockings and shoes.

"Why, there's Vivian Vane!" and both girls stood stock-still and almost choked with repressed excitement.

"My, it must be wonderful!" breathed one.

"Gee, she must be the happiest girl in the world," sighed the other.

. . . . . .

Hurry-up calls were now coming from McGowan for Vivian to return to the studio and make ready for the next production which was to be based on an entirely new theme—a suggestion of Jack's.

The idea had fascinated Vivian and so she was glad of the chance to plunge at once into the script as a spiritual diversion.

Bess kept her word—hard as it was to do it—and

refrained from telling her worried hubby the whole truth, but McGowan had seen enough to be very much alert to the situation. He said to Bess:

"I want you to be with her as much as possible and keep me informed of everything she says and does. I'm going to force a showdown on this thing within the next few days."

"But, Mac dear, don't do anything about it until Monday or Tuesday. Jack will be back then, and I think he should be with Vivian if anything happens."

"Yes, I think you're right, Bess, and I'll hold off until he comes."

Driver, however, was waiting for nobody. He was after his career-making job; so when on Saturday morning he saw the Filmart Star enter her cottage, he followed without even the formality of knocking.

"Well, Vivian, how about it?"

"About what, Jim?" she answered wearily.

"About my directing your next picture?"

"It isn't settled yet, Jim. You see Cyril Rex's contract runs for two more pictures; and besides, the office——"

"When does Morse come back?" he asked meaningly.

"Monday, Jim. I've just had a wire from him."

"All right; I'll give you till Monday to think it over," and with a gesture of finality he swept from the room.

"Did you give him the directorship, Vivian?" asked

Bess, breathlessly, as she dashed into the cottage a minute later.

"Not yet," replied the tired girl.

XLVI

I AM HURRYING TO YOU AS FAST AS OLD SANTA FE CAN DRAG ME. JACK.

The telegram was sent from Williams. "He had breakfast there," Vivian thought. "I wonder if Ynez waited on him!"

For a soothing half-hour Vivian looked beyond Baldy, down the long corridor of time; and her trip across the continent seemed like a wonderful escape from a dragon's cave, during which she ran and ran across plain and desert, river and cañon, until she found refuge on the top of a great mountain from which she viewed the promised land.

"Your breakfast, Mam'selle?"

"Oh, yes, Marie," she said pulling her hand across her eyes like a lecturer changing a lantern slide.

"Marie, call up the stable and have Laddie sent over. I'm going for a long ride in the mountains."

"*Oui,* Mam'selle."

"And tell them to give me a double-cinch Mexican saddle. Then put up a lunch—two sandwiches, a pickle, and a few loose raisins I can carry in my pocket."

"Are you going alone, Mam'selle?"

"Yes, alone."

It was a late-summer Sunday, a day upon which the pleasure seekers of "The Garden" sought the seashore. But Vivian was going to the mountains. There were dark things in her heart, and she wished to be up where there was lots of light. Also, she wished to be alone.

At this time of year the annual vegetation on the mountains had all dried up, and the panorama that unfolded as she mounted higher and higher was changed from the vivid greens of the watered gardens below to the dull tapestry shades of reds, tans and ochres—so loved by the painters. On this day Vivian loved it too. Even when the trail led out to the sheer face of the mountain, baked dry during the long summer months, there was something soothing in the warm solitude of it that made her throw back her head and drink deeply of those subtle perfumes of bay and sage.

As she reached one of the lesser summits, she stopped to rest her horse and look over the landscape. Immediately below her lay Hollywood, green and tropical, the glass roofs of the various studios shining like great jewels in a setting of jade and emerald. To the right she looked down upon the white shoreline of the ocean as it broke upon the golden strip of yellow, and through her glasses she could see that it was littered with bathers like colored beads thrown upon the sand.

"Perhaps the waves are like our troubles," she thought. "They are less turbulent when we get above them and see them in perspective."

It was late in the evening when she turned Laddie's head toward home, but like another troubled spirit of the long ago, she came out of the mountains soothed in spirit and fortified in person. She had made her decision.

XLVII

VIVIAN'S meeting with Driver was for eleven o'clock on Monday in her cottage on the lot. She did not expect Jack much before twelve, and it would be all over by that time. Refreshed by a perfect sleep, she was prepared to face the music, no matter what the tune.

"Bess," she said, when that good person had come in for her morning's visit, "I'm going to see Driver in a little while, and I'd like to be alone, if you don't mind." Bess McGowan detected something in the girl's manner that gave her a great confidence, so without further comment or ado she left her alone to her fate.

A few minutes later a knock came at the door, immediately followed by the appearance of Driver on the threshold.

"Come in, Jim," said Vivian cordially.

"Well, kiddo, how about it?" This time Driver

was not so expansive. In contrast with his past interviews, he was the nervous half of the dramatic picture.

"Jim, it can't be done," was the terse reply.

For fully a minute the astounded man sat still, frowning and twisting his fingers. Finally he spoke.

"Well, it seemed cheap to me, Vivian—just one pitcher. It meant mighty little to you, but a lot to me."

"No, Jim, you haven't the ability, and you're a trouble-maker. I was weak to have given in when I did. But I've decided finally now to end this whole miserable business."

"Well, of course," he replied with an affectation of geniality, "I can't force you to take me on if you don't want me. But look here, Vivian," and he took from his pocket a large envelope. "I've got a lot of pictures and things here that would make a wonderful story. Here's some stills at the studios, a couple at The Beanery, and some interesting documents regarding a little difficulty with the police. They ought to be worth something to you—say ten thousand dollars"

Though Vivian turned white when the "documents" were flashed on her, she managed to say, gripping her chair: "I'll not give you one cent for them."

"All rightie, Miss Vivian," went on Driver with a sinister little laugh, "but if you won't give me ten thousand for a front page story that would be the sensation of the day, perhaps Mr. Morse will."

"You can ask him, Jim. I see him coming down there by the scenario office now," and Vivian rose to her feet. "But please conduct your negotiations outside."

"Jest as you say, Vivian. We'll sit on the bench jest outside your winda, where you can watch his face when he learns about your bright and snappy little past. If you change your mind before I get to the point, jest rap."

"Go to it, Jim. If that's your last card, play it now." Urging him to the door, Vivian closed it on his back.

"Well, Driver, you here?" spoke Morse, setting down his handbag—he had come right from the train. —"Is Miss Vane in?"

"No, but she'll be back in a minute. Sit down, I wanta show you somethin'."

"Morse," he began as soon as they were together on the bench, "I've got a lot of dope here that I think will interest you—stuff that came into my hands in the course of business, and which would be worth a fortune to any newspaper fella."

"So?" commented the young man, raising his eyebrows. "What is it?"

"Why, these." And opening the big envelope Driver showed him a number of still photographs of Vivian, or rather Tessie, taken at the old Climax.

"Why, that's Miss Vane, isn't it?" asked Jack quietly.

Driver waited an instant for a rap, but as none came, he continued:

"Yes. She was known there as Tessie Boggs. She came to the Climax from the old Pork and Beanery on the Bowery."

"A waitress on the Bowery? Aren't you mistaken, Driver?"

Vivian, frozen stiff at the window, saw that Jack's face was emotionless as that of a statue, and she was very much puzzled.

"Isn't this just a still of some film story?" inquired the unperturbed young man.

"There's the photographer's name and the date."

"So it is, but who's this?"

"Oh, that's a pug named Jan Morsowski, she used to run around with. They say——"

"Now, don't invent scandal, Driver; have you anything else?"

"Yes, these," he answered, holding some papers in his hand. "It seems that she was a Juvenile Court delinquent when she worked at the Beanery, and afterwards at the Climax she ducked just before they could arrest her for robbing the wardrobe."

Behind the window, Vivian stood clutching the curtains. Driver had told it all; yet Jack was just sitting there looking straight ahead and uttering not a word. During half a minute's silence while Driver was putting the evidence of her past back in the envelope,

Vivian's heart nearly stopped beating. At last he spoke.

"What do you want for this stuff, Driver?"

"I think it's worth ten thousand, don't you?"

"Will you take a check?"

"I'll take *your* check, Mr. Morse, any day," he answered eagerly.

Reaching in his pocket the young man drew forth a check book, and unfastening a fountain pen, began to write. Vivian was horrified and puzzled, but unable to move. When he had finished, he handed the paper to Driver, whose eyes danced acquisitively.

Suddenly his face clouded as he noticed the signature. "Say, what's this you're pullin'? *Jan Morsowski!* That isn't your name. Whatcha doin'—kiddin' me?"

"Oh, I'd forgotten. That's the way I used to spell it, Driver. See '*Jan*' is '*John,*' and just drop off the '*owski*' and you have it—'*John B. Morse.*' I put the 'B' in for Uncle Bill."

Vivian sank to the window-seat while the room swam before her eyes. Of the following conversation she heard only an occasional sentence, but it was enough to hold her speechless.

"Driver," went on the young man to his astonished listener, as though monotonously reciting a piece learned by heart, "did you offer this stuff to Miss Vane?"

"Yes, and she refused to buy it."

"Good," replied Jack with a smile. "I knew she'd turn you down when you attempted to crowd your blackmail."

"Blackmail! Whadda you mean?"

"Don't get excited, Driver. I said *blackmail!* For which you could go to San Quentin for years."

"You'll see if it's blackmail—you——"

"I've already seen, Driver. I've just returned from New York; and I, too, have some evidence in the way of affidavits. Listen to this: 'Judge Jackson deposes that Tessie Boggs and Kitty Pilky were never legally wards of the court. As neither would tell on the other, as to which robbed the cash register, no conviction was had, but they were both subjected to a good scare, and were told to report to Mrs. Davis once a month. He further deposes that it was his firm belief that Kitty Pilky stole the money and that Tessie Boggs was simply trying to shield her friend by sharing the suspicion.'

"Here's another one: 'Judge Crowe, of the Superior Court of Brooklyn, deposes: That in the trial of Kitty Pilky the testimony showed that one Willie Stacy, a so-called camera-kid, outraged that his friend Tessie Boggs had been publicly accused of stealing a mandarin coat from the wardrobe department of the Climax Studio, and knowing her to have got it on the night it was seen, from Kitty Pilky's apartment, turned private detective, and when he offered his evidence some six weeks later to the management, Miss Pilky's

apartment was searched and found to be filled with loot from the studio wardrobe. He further deposes that Miss Pilky confessed, and when confronted by a Mrs. Davis of the New York Juvenile Court further confessed that it was she and not Tessie Boggs who had robbed the till of a place called The Pork and Beanery, where they had previously worked. That, because of the pleas of Driver and Belmont, the girl was given a suspended sentence and set free.'

"Now, Driver, as you've known this stuff for six years, don't you think your threat is blackmail?"

"Well, the publication of the straight facts along with these pitchers wouldn't be blackmail."

"No, and I'll admit that their release at present would be very offensive to Miss Vane, so I guess I'll have to ask you for them."

"Fer nothin'?" exploded Driver, jumping to his feet.

"Well, let's not bargain right in front of Miss Vane's house. We'll step down there behind that set where no one will see us."

So confused was Vivian by the startling dénouement she had just overheard, that she sat in a state of utter collapse and did not even know of the men's departure.

"Now, Driver," said Jack when they were safely out of sight behind the big Moorish interior, "give me that stuff."

"For ten thousand plunks."

"For nothing."

Driver grinned, buttoned his coat tight about the envelope and shook his head.

"Don't make me take it from you, Driver."

"Take it from me! *Take* it from me!! Say, child, don't make me laugh. I've got a split lip."

"Driver, the joke is old and the tense wrong. What you meant to say was that you are going to have"—a stinging blow on the mouth sent the man reeling—"a split lip."

Surprised and stunned by the sudden, unexpected blow, Driver stood still for an instant, gathering his addled wits together; then as his objective world came again into focus, he lunged forward like an enraged bull. Had his arms and legs been able properly to correlate, Jack Morse would have been killed on the spot. But Driver's reflexes lacked perfection and this was not Jack Morse before him; it was Jan Morsowski. So, instead of biting his antagonist in two, Driver's own chin collided with two terrific uppercuts that temporarily turned off his mortal gas to such an extent that his eyes became slightly crossed and his mouth took on that unintelligent look one sees in the faces of very tired alcoholics when suddenly awakened.

But if Driver's reason was, for the moment, in suspense, his instincts were still active. Seizing a six-foot stage brace, shod on its battle end with a wicked metal hook, he raised it to strike Jan; but with his hands above his head and his north and equatorial zones quite undefended, he presented to the former middle-

weight champion of the Olympic Athletic Club a most vulnerable and inviting target. Having a wide choice, Jan decided upon the pit of the stomach, and while Driver was still contemplating, if not murder, at least mayhem, the young oil engineer sent in such a crashing blow to the sensitive spot that the poor fellow doubled up like a boy with cramps. Rolling him over, Jan unbuttoned Driver's coat and took from his inside pocket the documents relating to Tessie's past.

Hank Todd, working on Stage VI, had seen Jim Driver and Mr. Jack Morse go behind the big set, and something in their manners prompted him to follow. As he entered the Caliph's palace, his professional instincts caused him to stop and rearrange the sheets covering some of his precious props, when suddenly he heard a scuffling noise, and stepped through the ornate entrance at the rear. He arrived on the scene just in time to see Driver lying helpless and battered, while Jan (now Jack) was endeavoring with meticulous care to withdraw without soiling his trousers.

"Well, for the love o' Mike!" exploded the grinning "Props." "Looks as though a cyclone had struck my old college chum."

"It did," replied Jack with a smile, "a Polish Cyclone." Before Hank could get the significance of the remark, he added hurriedly: "Hank, Driver has just been trying to blackmail Miss Vane, and I think he ought to be removed from the lot. I understand

there is a ceremony goes with the expulsion of traitors to the Filmart Studio."

"I'll attend to it," replied Hank with decision. And Jack, dusting himself off, adjusted his straw hat (which had never left his head) and walked over to the cottage. Vivian, he thought, might be wondering at his delay.

XLVIII

JACK found Vivian still sitting in the window-seat, staring at him with eyes like those of a fawn.

"Oh, Jack!" she said faintly, extending her hands to greet him. In three steps he had seized her in his arms; then he picked her up like a child, and began carrying her around the room.

"It's all right, it's all right. Driver has gone and he'll never bother you again." Her only reply was to bury her face farther in his neck, pat him on the back with her encircling arms, and repeat over and over again, "Oh, Jack, I'm so glad you are here."

For fully five minutes he leaned against the table holding her in his arms while Vivian gave way to her pent-up feelings in a flood of tears. Gradually the storm passed, and releasing her tense, possessive grip, she finally lay perfectly still in delicious relaxation.

"I was by the window, Jack, and heard it all. How long have you known that—that——?"

"That you were little Tessie? Ever since that day you caught me snooping in your den. I took my picture from the frame and saw that old inscription that you wrote so many years ago. You've changed in many ways, dear, but you still make your Y's just the same—for as soon as I reached the club, I looked up your note asking me to play that football game, and sure enough, there it was—the Y with the curious flourish, just like the one on the picture."

"And it's true that you are Jan. It is all so strange and wonderful. But, Jack, dear, how? When? Oh, there are so many things I want to know."

It was a long talk that followed, but swift and fragmentary:

. . . . . .

". . . Then, after that night in The Beanery your wan little face—it was wan in those days—haunted me until one day . . ."

. . . . . .

"And did you go over to the Climax looking for me?"

"Yes, but you had gone. I learned about the mandarin coat row, and——"

"Did you think I stole it?"

"No, nor anybody else—least of all Driver. He had sworn to no warrant, but you had run away——"

"Oh, I was so afraid of the Juvenile Court——"

. . . . . .

"Judge Jackson had told me there was no charge

against you there either, so I wanted to find you and let you know, but Hank wasn't at the address Spike gave me. . . . Then one day Buck McGurk, one of the boys who was with me that night in the Beanery, told me of seeing you in Frank's Place, and——"

"Then why didn't you come and tell me?"

"Why? Well, I regretted it many times afterward. But I had to appear at a smoker that night at the Olympic, and so I telephoned Judge Jackson, and he said Mrs. Davis lived over in Jersey, and he'd ask her to stop in that evening and tell you——"

"Mrs. Davis? Why, I saw her at the train."

"Yes, when she got to Frank's they told her you were leaving that night for Chicago. She hurried down but the train was just pulling out."

"And that is what she was there for! Oh, heavens, if——"

"She told me how she tried to pantomime the good news to you, but you disappeared from the window in abject fear. The good old soul felt so badly about it that she telegraphed a Juvenile officer in Chicago to meet the train, but the stupid fellow missed you."

"No, Jack, he wasn't stupid; I was too smart—that's all. Oh, to think I didn't know all this before. I've lived in terror all these years. And to think; I would have met *you* then."

"Maybe it was better to meet as we did."

. . . . . .

". . . and then when I saw what Driver was up to I thought I'd better go down and get evidence of his blackmailing threats. That's why——"

"Oh, my fairy prince, I knew you would kill the dragon!"

. . . . . .

Thus these two children of the slums, whom fate had snatched from that sterile soil, told of their amazing adventures. Nor did they marvel overmuch at their final meeting, for in the happy security of each other's arms, they believed it had been ordered from the first.

XLIX

IN the early days of the Filmart Studio (those grand old days when the cattle of the west roamed the ranges at will, because the cowpunchers were all in the movies) there had been introduced into the etiquette of this new cosmopolis a snappy outdoor sport known as "the razoo," which consisted in making a ritual of any dismissal resulting from seditious or traitorous conduct (such, for instance, as tipping off a rival to comedy gags, betraying locations, or in any manner "boring from within"), and this ritual was now invoked to speed the parting of Driver for "lése majesté" to his queen.

"Boys," cried Hank Todd, when some three hundred loyal subjects of Vivian had gathered round the

bewildered and half-prostrate form of Driver, "this here dirty dog has been tryin' to blackmail Miss Vane. Mr. Jack Morse—who some of you guys thought was a bit too light-waisted—has reduced the piece of cheese to this. Now what'll we do with him?"

"The razoo!" came from three hundred throats.

"All right, mates. Bring on the chariot. And here, Al, you and Tim go over to his bat cave and get his stuff. We don't want him leavin' his poisonous effects behind him."

In less than a minute the chariot arrived, a wheelbarrow of generous proportions, and Driver, by now furious and protesting, was set in it, with his feet hanging over the front, and—lest he feel an inclination to get out—a huge packing case full of his "poisonous effects" laid in his lap, which effectually anchored any motor reaction his turgid mind might suggest.

When all was ready, the great procession formed, with Todd at the handles of the chariot, and proceeded up "Main Street," then around the lot—first through the wicked gambling quarters of "Nome," then into a "quaint old Virginia village," across "Fifth Avenue" and a subway station, through the court of the Saracen Caliph, around back of the Crusader's banquet hall, and finally along the rutty road of an old mining town, appropriately named Hell's Gate. It was here that the lot ended, and Driver's cinematic obsequies were to be consummated.

The big gate was now thrown open and the whole

variegated population of Makebelieveville, from the scenario hounds with the "June-bug" spectacles to the tinseled extras in kaleidoscopic costumes, and the camera kids, lined up in two columns, while Hank Todd wheeled his offensive burden down the street.

Now, it stands to reason that anyone living, or having even a few hours each day of his being in Movieland, is bound to become blasé regarding queer noises. Exploding guns, or crashing glass, which in most other walks of life would fetch everybody to the windows, are not even heard in this hectic world of tumult and catastrophe. Consequently, when McGowan, in conference with some department heads during the noon hour, was interrupted by loud cheers, he met the interruption with bored indifference. Suddenly the telephone rang.

"Mac, this is Bess. Did you know they're giving Driver the razoo? They're wheeling him through Virginia now. I can see the procession from my window."

Like a shot McGowan, manager of the Vivian Vane Company, the largest and most important unit on the Filmart lot, jumped from his office, ran diagonally across Asia, Africa and most of America, arriving at Hell's Gate just as Driver was to be dumped out.

Hot and out of wind, the bald-headed chief waddled down between the lines of yelling excommunicators and raised his right hand.

"Aw hell!" went up three hundred profane indignations, "He's going to crab the party."

But to their utter amazement he did nothing of the kind. On the contrary, after a word with Todd, the "hearse" proceeded, and at the dramatic moment, when Driver was dumped outside the gates of Movieland and lay sprawling among his personal props on his hands and knees, the fat, genial manager of the Vivian Vane Company stepped up and gave the excommunicant a kick in the south equatorial zone that, though hardly compatible with the dignity of his office, nevertheless resulted in a tremendous emphasis being placed on Driver's exit.

Driver's passing was as complete as the things he stood for.

L

A WEEK after the hectic events of that historic Monday, Jack and Vivian presented themselves at the office of Benjamin McGowan, General Manager of the Vivian Vane Company. They rapped formally, entered hand in hand in mock embarrassment, and took their seats like two naughty children.

"Mac," said Vivian (and she *was* blushing, at that), "Jack and I are going to be married. First we decided to elope, but then we thought it wouldn't be fair to you and Bess and Uncle Bill. You are the only relatives that either of us have, and so——"

"Children," interrupted the beaming manager with

the air of a stern parent, "your wedding has been all arranged. Bess and I have worked it out down to the last detail. You will both do just as we say or you won't get any cut-glass coal scuttles or hand-knit neckties, or unmarked exchangeable silver, or anything."

"In that case, Mac," answered Jack gravely, "we'll have to follow your continuity. But, Mac, honestly, we don't——"

"No 'buts' now, Jack. I've managed Vivian so far, and I give up my job at the altar—not before. After that, I leave it to you to make her give up her secret gum vice. No. Vivian must have a wedding adequate to her station, and as I'm the parent that's putting up for it, I insist upon a free hand."

What "adequate to her station" meant, when dramatically expressed by the "free hand" of Ben McGowan, may be gathered from the fact that Vivian's resourceful executive caused to be erected on the glass stage an exact reproduction of the interior of the famous Little Church around the Corner in New York; that the ceremony was performed by The Reverend Father Neil, whose similar cinema offices were as familiar to the film fans as the stars themselves; and that the attendants and guests included all the greatest luminaries of the silver screen.

"Immediately after the ceremony the bride and groom, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. McGowan and Mr. William Morse, left in a private car for an ex-

tended trip in the East." Thus the newspapers. "It is estimated 5,000 loyal fans were at the station to see them off, and needless to say, moving pictures were made both of the wedding and the departure, though the former was exclusively a personal record and will not be released to the public."

LI

DURING their two weeks spent in New York, Mr. and Mrs. Morse were subjected to a bombardment of dinner invitations and other social affairs, but on several occasions they managed to escape their pursuers and go on sight-seeing trips like ordinary outlanders.

Then on the last Saturday night before leaving to return to California, they sallied forth on an adventure both had planned with curious anticipations. Leaving the hotel by a side entrance, where they would not be observed, they jumped into a waiting taxicab and pulled down the blinds. "Drive down to the Bowery," Jack called through the tube, when they were safe within.

In a few minutes they were again in the midst of their childhood's world and, leaving the taxi, they strolled arm in arm, while the years seemed to fall from their shoulders, and once again they lived over the old sensations.

"I even love the smell of it, Jack," said Vivian as

she inhaled deeply while passing a coffee stand. "That's where Kitty and I used to go after a show. It was a pleasant change from the Beanery."

Then suddenly Jack stopped before a second-hand book stall. "The hours I've stood on this very spot reading; not knowing that my precious girl was working away in that smelly old Beanery."

"Smelly old nothing, Jack. I loved it."

At last they stopped beneath the awning of a pawn shop whither Vivian had led Jack, making him promise to look in the windows on the way. "Now, turn," she said; and as they both wheeled about they saw across the street the old familiar illumination. Other signs had come to the Bowery in the years that had passed, but the one that held their excited attention seemed more beautiful than all the rest. "Just think, Jack, the pig has never to this day caught the bean. Look at him go. Only I don't believe he runs as fast as he used to."

Crossing over, Vivian was delighted to see that the day's "specials" were still lettered on the windows. "But, Jack, things are certainly changing. Just look at those prices. Beef stew twenty cents! Heavens, and it used to be only fifteen!"

As the Pork and Beanery "caught the swell trade of the Bowery," it was no wonder that Vivian and Jack should make their entrance quite unobserved. Dressed in a tan, tailored suit and a small, trim hat, Vivian's very size could hardly attract competitive attention,

whereas Jack was always so well dressed no one could ever remember what he had on.

"Oh, Jack," burbled Vivian. "Let's take our places in the line and get some of the good old beans."

They joined the long queue that formed down the north wall and behaved like two school children waiting for Santa Claus to give them each an orange and a cornucopia.

However remote the place, and however careful one is not to face the crowd, there is always someone who will recognize a celebrity. So it was that two girls, reading a movie magazine at a near-by table, glanced up at the petite blonde in the tan suit, and then at each other. "Why, there's Vivian Vane!" they both exclaimed at once.

The exciting news was soon telegraphed all over the Beanery, and Vivian suddenly saw that every patron of the place was gazing at her. Her quick embarrassment betrayed the truth, and in less than a moment the young girl was surrounded by an eager crowd each wishing to shake her hand. "Oh, we read about you in the papers. And so this is Mr. Morse. Hello, Jack, old top, howja do it?"

Knowing Dorgan's penchant for celebrities, someone notified the proprietor, and he was on the spot in an instant taking proprietorial possession of his distinguished guests. "Call Schmitty," he said to a waitress standing on the outskirts of the crowd.

Would they pose for their pictures? Certainly,

she did little else, Vivian laughingly assured him, and in less than a minute the tableau was arranged and the flash went off, showing the bride and groom standing by the bean pot, with Dorgan smiling beside the white-capped dealer on the platform behind them. As the flash died out, the crowd burst into cheers.

Instantly Vivian's dramatic sense of situation took possession of her, and forgetting all caution, she stepped up behind the rail, slipped on the cap and apron of the serving girl, and, seizing the ladle, cried out:

"Step right up, boys—a thousand for a dime. Hot, hot, hot, see 'em steam! Ho, there's a black one for luck. What's that? No, you can't beat the good old bean. What makes the Boston boys so smart, folks? It's beans, beans, beans. Boys, there's brains in every bean, and a thousand for a dime!"

If Vivian Vane had hitherto lacked admirers on the Bowery, she won them all at that moment. Pandemonium broke loose, and every diner in the place joined in the line that was being served by America's great film queen.

"Well, it takes an actress to show some of these here dolls their own business; listen to that patter, will you?"

"Why, say, she's a scream, ain't she?"

"And pipe the way she handles the ladle."

"Say, Gert, watch 'er, and get a little o' that Fifth Avenoo technic into *your* wrist."

"I don't care if she makes *two* million a year—she's some goil."

There was one person in that noisy room who was silent and strangely puzzled. Dorgan, standing beside the pot, attempted to talk to the proud young husband, but hearing that familiar monologue, he could stand it no longer, and while Vivian was in the act of serving the next customer, he edged over beside her.

"There was only one girl in the world who could patter that way," he whispered, "and her name was Tessie Boggs." He looked her squarely in the eyes.

"Sh-h-h, Pop, not now. Later on," she whispered back, patting his arm. Dorgan, closing his eyes, rocked himself on his toes, and smiled.

"Now for a little visit in your office," said Vivian, as the plate of the last happy diner had been filled. Before the hilarious patrons knew what was happening, she and Jack had disappeared into the protecting walls of Dorgan's sanctum.

"God, Tessie, how did you do it? Why, I ain't begun to get it clear yet. This'll be a wonderful ad for the Beanery." Dorgan's muddled volubility was cut short.

"Pop, you mustn't tell—at least not now. If you promise, I'll do something for you later on that will boost the old Beanery more yet. And now tell me: have you heard anything of Kitty?"

Dorgan nodded over his shoulder.

"She's here?" exclaimed Vivian, unbelievingly.

"Yes, she's been here, goin' on four years. She's in charge of the kitchen. She didn't make out very well in the pictures, I guess, or sumthin' happened, but——"

"Send for her, Pop. And you and Jack step into that other room so I can see her alone."

When Kitty, fat, faded, and looking forty, stood in the doorway, she was trembling all over, and she could not look up.

"Why, Kitty, what's the matter?" asked Vivian as she ran toward her.

"Oh, I knew it was you," the poor creature sniffed, her lips quivering. "Driver came in here a while back and showed me some pitchers of you. He wasn't sure you were 'um, and he ast me. I saw right away they was you, but I never let on. I knew he was up to somethin'. But I didn't think you'd ever want to see me again—after what I done. You don't know how sorry I've been, Tess. All these years I've been goin' to your pitchers and thinkin'!"

"You poor dear girl!" exclaimed Vivian, throwing her arms about her old chum. "Let's forget all that miserable stuff." Then through their tears, they made plans for the future.

In the other room Jack and Dorgan waited impatiently.

"How long have you known Tessie, Mr. Morse?" asked the proprietor after some fencing.

"Six or seven years."

"Before she went in pictures?"

"Yes."

"Why, she was workin' here then."

"Yes, I met her in here."

"In the Beanery!"

"I was living in New York then, and one night I just happened in and met her. Curiously enough, nothing further developed from the accidental meeting until years afterward in California."

"Well, I'll be damned," said Dorgan, "if this ain't a funny little world!"

Just then the door opened, and the girls walked in with their arms around each other's waists, and though their eyes were wet, their faces were smiling.

"Kitty's going back with me to California, Pop. If she's under obligations to you, Mr. Morse will arrange it satisfactorily to-morrow morning. We must go now."

Once inside the taxi on the homeward trip, Vivian was very thoughtful. "Kitty was badly treated by the gods, Jack. The poor girl couldn't help it, of course, but she had no character—just good looks; and you can see what has become of them. But she's awfully happy. I'm going to take her back with us. I've told her she will be in the wardrobe department, and she can wallow in pretty clothes to her heart's content."

Came Monday night and the farewell dinner at the Riverside home of William T. Morse. Despite the

banter, it was plain to be seen that Ben McGowan had something on his chest. At last it came.

"Vivian, Bess and I have been talking things over with your Uncle Bill here, and we're all of the opinion that the real story of your life is so much better than my poor feeble publicity stuff that we ought to release the true tale authoritatively."

"But don't you think you ought to consult the hero?"

"How about it, Jack?"—this from McGowan.

"I should be proud to be part of such a story," he answered warmly, "if Uncle Bill doesn't object."

"As far as I'm concerned," put in the well-known stock-exchange member, "I'm tickled to death to have married into the Morsowskis and Boggses. That makes three families, at least, who didn't come in the *Mayflower*. How about your ancestors, McGowan?"

"Oh, they came over the same way yours did, and so did Bess's."

"Then why should we Sons and Daughters of the Steerage not be proud to give publicity to such a story as Vivian's and Jack's? Why——"

"But the question is: how shall we release it?" asked McGowan with his usual singleness of purpose.

"I have it," answered Vivian, snapping her fingers to announce the birth of a new idea, "You know Rob Wagner? Well, Rob said to me three years ago: 'Vivian, you've got a corking story inside of you, and if you ever decide to make it known, you must let me

tell it.' Rob likes me, and I'm sure he would make me out lots nicer than I am."

"He couldn't!" exploded the boy who was holding her hand under the table.

And that, kind reader, is the way this tale came about.

THE END

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